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*Welcome to the most recent issue of Rural Rounds, which includes information and updates for members of the Section of Rural Medicine.*

May 6, 2026

Dear Colleagues,

Last Friday, May 1, marked National Physicians' Day, an annual celebration of the work physicians do to provide essential care in communities across Canada. That work is especially important in Alberta's rural and remote communities, where our patients rely on us to provide care at every age and stage of their lives and our communities rely on us for the economic viability of the places we call home. On National Physicians' Day, and every day, we need to celebrate the unique and essential role of rural and remote physicians.

I recently had an opportunity to celebrate some of Canada's amazing rural physicians at the [Society of Rural Physicians \(SRPC\) Awards Gala](#). Held in Quebec City on April 17, the annual gala recognizes those who demonstrate leadership, dedication and innovation in their efforts to advance rural and remote health care.

This year's ceremony began with a touching tribute to Dr. Jill Konkin, who passed away last July and was a mentor and friend to so many of us. She is deeply missed and I was pleased to see SRPC acknowledge her many profound contributions to rural medicine at the start of the evening's events.

Close to 60 physicians, residents, students and organizations were recognized for their contributions to rural medicine during the ceremony, with several Alberta physicians included in that list. Dr. Kristy Penner, Dr. Andrew Haliday, and Dr. Kapilan Panchendrabose all received awards during the event and I congratulate them on this well-deserved recognition. Their patients, their communities and all of Alberta are enriched by their commitment to rural and remote health.

I was also honoured to receive the 2026 Rural Service Award during the ceremony, and was grateful to be there in person to receive the award and celebrate the passion for rural medicine that brought us all together. It's an inspiration to be in the room with so many of my colleagues who share my commitment to rural health, and the understanding that

what we do is more than a profession and more, even, than a calling. Rural medicine becomes who you are, and your purpose for all that you do for your patients and your community.

None of us choose rural medicine for awards or recognition – and none of us do it alone. We succeed because of the teams we work with and the colleagues who mentor and inspire us at the start of our careers and throughout our journey as physicians. I am grateful for all that rural medicine has allowed me to do and excited by the incredible things still to come.

Thank you, as always, for everything you do for your patients, your communities and for the sustainability of rural and remote health.

Regards,

Dr. Rithesh Ram

President, Section of Rural Medicine

