

# Rural Health Research NEWS

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## Connecting Communities: Rural and Urban 2007 – Report from Vermilion, AB

by **Dana Edge, RN, PhD.**  
Associate Professor, School of Nursing,  
Queen's University

From October 11 to 13, members of the Canadian Rural Health Research Society (CRHRS) participated with the Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation (CRRF) in a three-day conference in Vermilion, Alberta. The conference was held at Lakeland College and local community members, as well as Lakeland College students, were instrumental in ensuring that the conference ran smoothly.

Unique to this conference was the inclusion of field trip tours as part of the conference itinerary. In the afternoon of the first day, conference participants had a choice of six field



trips: a) economic development and the military at Canadian Forces Base Wainwright; b) agricultural diversification at Noralta Farms and demonstration of an automated oat bagging machine; c) provision of local seniors health care in Vermilion with commentary by the mayor; d) cultural heritage at the Mixburn Colony of the Hutterite

*continued on page 2*

RECAP
<b>Connecting Communities: Rural and Urban 2007</b>
Oct. 11-13, 2007 Vermilion, Alberta

## Health Care Providers on the Move

by **Roger Pitblado**  
Centre for Rural and Northern Health  
Research (CRaNHR), Laurentian University

The geographical distribution of health care providers is constantly changing. It is influenced by many factors including both internal and external migration. Understanding and measuring where exactly these health professionals are located and how they move within the country (internal

migration) is critical to the proper planning and management of the health care system. In many ways, these movements are a reflection of some of the most critical rural health-care issues of recruitment and retention, access and continuity of care.

The Canadian Institute for Health Information has recently published my analyses of 25 healthcare occupational groups based on data from the Census of

*continued on page 5*

## In this issue

President's Message . . . . .	2	Saskatchewan Population Health and Evaluation Research Union (SPHERU) . . . . .	3
<b>In Brief:</b>		Publications . . . . .	4
Senate Committee Presentation . . . . .	3	Changes to Board Membership . . . . .	4
Review of the CRHRS . . . . .	3	New Projects . . . . .	5
Special Issue Examines the Rural Health Workforce in Canada . . . . .	3	Coming Events . . . . .	5



## President's Message Having a Break...

It has been some time since the CRHRS has been able to produce a newsletter and we are very grateful that Marg Boone from Lakehead University has agreed to take on the role of Newsletter Editor. All members are encouraged to be involved with the newsletter; we look for your submissions of publications, grants, and initiatives related to rural and remote health. We will continue to produce the newsletter bi-annually in electronic form only—please pass it on to others who are involved in similar initiatives and organizations.



This past summer I unfortunately fractured my right fibula and ankle—what a journey it has been to be able to walk independently once again. My injury became more complicated when I developed cellulitis and an allergic reaction to the steristrips. Two admissions to the hospital, two months with a PIC (peripherally inserted intravenous catheter) line for antibiotics and three months in a wheelchair

meant a lot of interaction with both the rural and small urban health care delivery systems. My experience convinced me even more that the rural research we are doing is essential if we are going to make significant and necessary changes within the health care delivery system. There is a paucity of data that informs us about the most appropriate type of health care professional needed to provide care for rural residents—for example, how safe is it to use Licensed Practical Nurses in their expanded scope of practice for rural home care patients? Beyond the type of health care professional, what are the most appropriate health care delivery models—what are the contextual and political factors in urban and rural settings that we need to take into account when developing such models? How do we ensure patient safety when health care professionals work simultaneously in two health regions



(because of the lack of full-time positions) in order to financially make a living? The shortages of health care professionals in both urban and rural are very real. For rural residents, the quality of the care they receive will be even more at a crisis point before we have the opportunity to collect relevant data. Political advocacy at the regional and national levels is needed to ensure that special calls for funding are developed that focus on patient safety, rural health care delivery systems and client and family experiences with the current system. For those who have collected such information in select areas across the country, it behooves them to disseminate the information to decision makers in useable formats. Working with agencies such as the Victorian Order of Nurses to collect relevant data in rural home care, for example, is also an option and one that could be pursued by rural researchers. There is significant work ahead if we are prepared to take it on and repair our fractured health care delivery system.

*Some men see things as they are and ask why. Others dream things that never were and ask why not.* —George Bernard Shaw

— Judith Kulig, RN, DNSc  
School of Health Sciences  
University of Lethbridge  
Chair CRHRS

## Connecting Communities

*continued from page 1*

Brethern; e) the Sunfuel™ bio-diesel processor at Lakeland College; and, f) a tour of the Alberta Salt Company, producer of Windsor-brand salt, at Elkpoint. Following the afternoon of field trips, the Society held its annual general meeting at 5pm at the local Legion hall.

The conference provided the opportunity for members of the Society to interact with rural community developers, as well as researchers concerned with rural economic policy. At a plenary on the second day, participants heard Senator Joyce Fairbairn, from the Senate Standing Committee on

Agriculture and Forestry, provide results from the interim report “Understanding Freefall: The Challenge of the Rural Poor”. A selection of Society members’ contributed papers focused on the following topics: rural physician satisfaction and practice intentions; health status comparisons between rural and urban in Saskatchewan; health promotion among rural women; collaborative efforts to improve health access in northern communities; rural and urban differences among public health nurses and high priority families; and, comparison of use of emergency departments in rural versus urban settings. The conference was considered a success with over 150 registrants.

## IN BRIEF

## Senate Committee Presentation: Rural Poverty and Health: What Do We Know?

by Raymond Pong  
Centre for Rural and Northern Health Research (CRaNHR), Laurentian University

The Standing Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry has been conducting hearings on rural poverty with a view to preparing a Senate report on this issue. Raymond Pong was invited to appear before the Committee on Parliament Hill. He submitted a written presentation and appeared before the Committee to answer questions. The written presentation titled "Rural Poverty and Health: What Do We Know?" can be viewed on the Committee's special website or on the CRaNHR website at: [www.cranhr.ca/pdf/Presentation\\_Senate\\_Committee\\_on\\_rural\\_poverty\\_-\\_May\\_2007.pdf](http://www.cranhr.ca/pdf/Presentation_Senate_Committee_on_rural_poverty_-_May_2007.pdf)

## Review of the Canadian Rural Health Research Society: A Need for Promotion A Desire for Interaction

by Judith Kulig, RN, DNSc  
School of Health Sciences  
University of Lethbridge

The CRHRS commissioned a review of the Society in order to further develop and grow as an organization. Samantha Biggs of Lakehead University developed and analyzed the completed a survey and conducted interviews with similar organizations in Canada and the United States. The survey was sent to CRHRS members and non-members such as attendees at part rural health conferences and executive members of similar societies. The major findings of the review include: (1) most non-

member survey respondents were not aware of the CRHRS; (2) the majority of CRHRS members are interested in more involvement in the Society; and, (3) there is a need to expand involvement to decision makers and medical and basic scientists. The CRHRS Board will follow-up by hiring a part-time project coordinator to work with the Chair by developing and implementing a plan to address these issues thereby promoting the Society. The full review is available as a pdf on the CRHRS web page: [http://crhrs-scrsr.usask.ca/eng/reports/CRHRS\\_Report-Mar11.pdf](http://crhrs-scrsr.usask.ca/eng/reports/CRHRS_Report-Mar11.pdf).

## Special Issue Examines the Rural Health Workforce in Canada

by Raymond Pong  
Centre for Rural and Northern Health Research (CRaNHR), Laurentian University

Raymond Pong was also invited by the *Cahiers de sociologie et de démographie médicales (CSDM)* to edit a special issue of the journal. *CSDM*, published in Paris, France, since 1961, is an international journal on health human resources issues, often in an international context. The special issue, guest-edited by Raymond Pong, was devoted to examining "The Rural Health Workforce in Canada". This special issue of *CSDM*, published in December 2007, contains six peer-reviewed articles by rural health experts across Canada on a variety of rural health workforce-related topics such as ethical issues in using foreign health care providers in rural Canada, rural-urban migration of rehabilitation and technical health care workers, rural medical education strategies, and the use of paraprofessionals in rural mental health services. A few copies of this special issue are still available for purchase from the Centre for Rural and Northern Health Research (please contact: [cranhr@laurentian.ca](mailto:cranhr@laurentian.ca)).

## The Saskatchewan Population Health and Evaluation Research Unit

by Kristeva Dowling, MSoc.Sc  
SPHERU

The Saskatchewan Population Health and Evaluation Research Unit (SPHERU) is an interdisciplinary team of population health researchers from the Universities of Regina and Saskatchewan, and is the first bi-university health research unit of its kind in Saskatchewan.

SPHERU has three key research themes: Northern and Aboriginal Health, Healthy Children and Rural Health. The Northern and Aboriginal Health research studies the role that culture plays as a health determinant, the Healthy Children research considers how contexts shape children's health and development outcomes, and the Rural Health research focuses on the impacts of socio-economic determinants of health in rural populations. SPHERU also conducts evaluation research and promotes health equity by addressing health disparities through policy relevant research.

SPHERU has three sites within the province. The Director, Bonnie Jeffery, some administrative staff and the SPHERU Population Health Research Facility are located in the University of Regina and Saskatchewan offices at the SIAST Academic Centre in Prince Albert. Nine other researchers and additional administrative staff are housed between the two other sites at the Universities of Regina and Saskatchewan.

SPHERU was established in 1999 and is funded by the Saskatchewan Health Research Foundation, with additional project specific funding provided by other provincial and national health research funding agencies.

## Publications

Names of members of the CRHRS are **in bold**.

**Boivin A**, Légaré F, & Gagnon M-P. Competing norms: Canadian rural family physicians' perception of clinical practice guidelines and shared decision-making. *Journal of Health Services Research and Policy*. 2007 Accepted for publication (October 2, 2007).

Clemenson, J.A., & **Pitblado, J.R.** (2007). Recent trends in rural-urban migration. *Our Diverse Cities*, 3 (Summer 2007), 25-29.

Clark, K., & **Leipert, B.** (2007). Strengthening and sustaining social supports for rural elders. *Online Journal of Rural Nursing and Health Care*, 7 (1), 13-26.

Crosato, K., Ward-Griffin, C., & **Leipert, B.** (2007). Aboriginal women caregivers of the elderly in geographically isolated communities. *Rural and Remote Health*, 7: 796 (online). Available from: <http://rrh.deakin.edu.au>.

Curran, V., Fleet, L., **Pong, R.W.**, **Bornstein, S.**, Jong, M., **Strasser, R.P.**, & Tesson, G. (2007). A survey of rural medical education strategies throughout the medical education continuum in Canada. *Cahiers de sociologie et de démographie médicales*, 47(4), 445-468.

**DesMeules, M.**, Luo, W., Wang, F., & **Pong, R.W.** (2007). Rural places: Variations in health. *Health Policy Research Bulletin*, 14, 19-22.

**Heng, D.**, **Pong, R.W.**, Chan, B.T.B., Degani, N., Crichton, T., Goertzen, J., McCreedy, W., & Rourke, J. (2007). Graduates of northern Ontario family medicine residency programs practise where they train. *Canadian Journal of Rural Medicine*, 12(3), 146-152. [http://www.cma.ca/index.cfm/ci\\_id/53270/la\\_id/1.htm](http://www.cma.ca/index.cfm/ci_id/53270/la_id/1.htm).

**Kulig, J.**, Andrews, ME., Stewart, N., **Pitblado, R.**, **Macleod, M.**, Bentham, D., D'Arcy, C., Morgan, D., Forges, D., Remus, G., & Smith, B., (2008) How do Registered Nurses define Rurality?

*Australian Journal of Rural Health*, 16(1), 28-32.

**Kulig, J.**, Krupa, E., & Nowatzki, N. (2007). Teaching and Learning about Community Development Online: Insights and Lessons Learned. *Canadian Journal of Learning & Technology* 33(2), 81-95.

Lagacé, C., Desmeules, M., **Pong, R.W.**, & **Heng, D.** (2007). Non-communicable disease and injury-related mortality in rural and urban places of residence: A comparison between Canada and Australia. *Canadian Journal of Public Health*, 98(Supplement 1), S62-S69.

**Macleod, M.**, **Dosman, J.**, **Kulig, J.**, & **Medves, J.** (2007). The development of the Canadian Rural Health Research Society: Creating capacity through connections. *Rural and Remote Health* 7:622 (Online)

**Minore, J. B.**, **Boone, M.** & Arthur, A. (2007). Considering the paraprofessional: One option for overcoming rural health human resources deficits. *Cahiers de Sociologie et de Démographie Médicales*, 47(4), 511-534

**Pitblado, J.R.** (2007). *Summary Report: Distribution and Internal Migration of Canada's Health Care Workforce*. Ottawa, ON: Canadian Institute for Health Information. [http://secure.cihi.ca/cihiweb/products/2007\\_migration\\_summary\\_e\\_web.pdf](http://secure.cihi.ca/cihiweb/products/2007_migration_summary_e_web.pdf).

**Pitblado, J.R.** (2007). Rural net migration of Canada's rehabilitative and technical health care workers. *Cahiers de sociologie et de démographie médicales*, 47(4), 427-444.

**Pong, R.W.** (2007). New thinking on an old problem: An introduction to 'The Rural Health Workforce in Canada'. *Cahiers de sociologie et de démographie médicales*, 47(4), 399-405.

**Pong, R.W.** (2007), ed. *The Rural Health Workforce in Canada* (A special issue of *Cahiers*



*de sociologie et de démographie médicales*). Paris, France: Centre de sociologie et de démographie médicales.

**Pong, R.W.**, Chan, B.T.B., Crichton, T., Goertzen, J., McCreedy, W., & Rourke, J. (2007). Big cities and bright lights: rural- and northern-trained physicians in urban practice. *Canadian Journal of Rural Medicine*, 12(3), 153-160. [http://www.cma.ca/index.cfm/ci\\_id/53271/la\\_id/1.htm](http://www.cma.ca/index.cfm/ci_id/53271/la_id/1.htm).

**Skinner, M.W.** & Joseph, AE (2007). The evolving role of voluntarism in ageing rural communities. *New Zealand Geographer*, 63 (2), 119-129.

Somers, G.T., **Strasser, R.**, & Jolly, B. (2007). What does it take? The influence of rural upbringing and sense of rural background on medical students' intention to work in a rural environment. *Journal of Rural and Remote Health*, 7 (Online), 706. [http://www.rh.org.au/publishedarticles/article\\_print\\_706.pdf](http://www.rh.org.au/publishedarticles/article_print_706.pdf).

Strasser, S., & **Strasser, R.P.** (2007). The Northern Ontario School of Medicine: A long-term strategy to enhance the rural medical workforce. *Cahiers de sociologie et de démographie médicales*, 47(4), 469-510.

## Changes to Board Membership

The CRHRS would not be successful without our volunteers who serve in a variety of capacities. Thanks to outgoing board members: Barbara Gfellner, Roger Piblado, Mary Lou Kelley and Bruce Minore who fin-

ished their terms in the fall of 2007.

The Board welcomes new members joining us in 2007/08: Marg Boone (who has agreed to organize the newsletter), Deatra Walsh, Kyle Whitfield and Allison Williams.

## Calling All Members... Great Opportunity

Be part of the newsletter committee. Our newsletter is a valuable means to connect, to learn, and to share. Join the committee and make it happen.

Contact: **Marg Boone**  
[mboone@lakeheadu.ca](mailto:mboone@lakeheadu.ca)



## Coming Event

CRHRS is currently planning with the Canadian Centre for Health and Safety in Agriculture (CCHSA) to be part of the upcoming **6th International Symposium** in Saskatoon, October 19-23.

**OCT.  
19-23  
2008**

The Symposium, entitled *Public Health & the Agricultural Rural Ecosystem*, will be held at the Sheraton Cavalier Hotel in downtown Saskatoon. CRHRS will hold a one-day dedicated Society conference on Sunday, the 19<sup>th</sup> titled *Rural Health in Changing Environments* immediately preceding the Symposium events. This day is part of the overall symposium but is sponsored and co-organized by the society. In addition, we anticipate one joint concurrent session with CCHSA during the main conference. More details can be found at: [www.cchsa-ccssma.usask.ca/pharesymposium2008/](http://www.cchsa-ccssma.usask.ca/pharesymposium2008/) or contact Dana Edge at [dana.edge@queensu.ca](mailto:dana.edge@queensu.ca), for more information.



## Health Care Providers

*continued from page 1*

Population (Statistics Canada) and Scott's Medical Database (CIHI). Full reports were prepared for 15 health professional groups and data tables for an additional ten. As well, the *Summary Report: Distribution and*

*Internal Migration of Canada's Health Care Workforce* provides a consolidated overview of the internal migration patterns of Canada's health professionals. These reports, in pdf format and in English or French, may be downloaded from the CIHI website: [http://secure.cihi.ca/cihiweb/dispPage.jsp?cw\\_page=AR\\_1749\\_E](http://secure.cihi.ca/cihiweb/dispPage.jsp?cw_page=AR_1749_E)

## New Projects

Names of members of the CRHRS are **in bold**.

**Kulig, J.** (Principal Investigator), B. Reimer, I. Townshend, **D. Edge**, K. Neves-Graca, & **N. Lightfoot**. *Resiliency in Rural Settlements that have experienced Wildfires: Implications for Disaster Management and Mitigation*. Social Sciences & Humanities Research Council Award: \$114,439. Start Date: April 1, 2007 - March 31, 2010.

Swenson, J.R., **Pong, R.W.**, Sherman, J., et al. (2008) Models of Outreach Psychiatric Services in Northern Ontario. Commissioned by the Ontario Psychiatric Outreach Program.

**Pong, R.W.**, Zmijowskyj, T., Sherman, J. et al (2008). Participation in Hospital Inpatient Care by Primary Care Physicians in Northern Ontario. Commissioned by the Northern Ontario School of Medicine.

**Hogenbirk, J., Pong, R.W.**, & Guérin, V. (2007-2008). An Evaluation of the Keewatinook Okimakanak Telehealth Network: An Update of the Economic Model. Commissioned by Keewatinook Okimakanak.

**Hogenbirk, J., Pong, R.W.**, & Guérin, V. (2007-2008). Development of Financial Indicators and Economic Modelling of Provincial/Federal Cost Drivers for Keewatinook Okimakanak Telehealth. Commissioned by Keewatinook Okimakanak.

**Leipert, B.**, Mc Williams, D., **Forbes, D.**, & **Kelley, M.L.** (2007-2009) Using Photovoice to Explore Rural Women's Perspectives Regarding Aging, and Social and Health Promotion Needs and Resources. Social Sciences and Humanities



Research Council (SSHRC) Research Development Initiative (RDI) Funded

**Leipert, B.** (2006-2008) Closing the Gap: Rural Women's Organizations and Rural Women's Health. Rural Women Making Change. (Part of Dr. B. Leach's SSHRC CURA). Dr. Leach, PI, (University of Guelph,)'s CURA, VP Research UWO and Schulich School of Medicine Dentistry Funded

**Skinner, M.W.** (principal investigator). Volunteer Caregiving in the Countryside. SSHRC Standard Research Grant (2007-2010).

**Skinner, M.W.** (principal investigator). Pilot Study of Volunteer Services in Ontario's Ageing Rural Communities. SSHRC Internal Operating Grant (2007-2008).

## Rural Health Research NEWS

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 Committee Members ..... Margaret Boone  
 Judith Kulig

## contact us / submissions



Please forward submissions to Sueli de Freitas at The Canadian Rural Health Research Society at [crhrs-scrrs@usask.ca](mailto:crhrs-scrrs@usask.ca). **Deadline for the next issue is August 15, 2008.**

This newsletter is available on the CRHRS website at <http://crhrs-scrrs.usask.ca/>.