Northern Ontario School of Medicine

Charter Class Bursary Fund

A Northern Solution

The Northern Ontario School of Medicine is evidence that when our communities pull together, northern solutions to northern issues can materialize. Over numerous years, individuals and groups across the vast expanse of Northern Ontario rallied with perseverance to bring a medical school to our region. Now, in less than a year, the School will welcome the charter class of students.

The Northern Ontario School of Medicine is a pioneering faculty of medicine working to the highest international standards. Its overall mission is to educate skilled physicians and undertake health research suited to community needs. In fulfilling this mission, the Northern Ontario School of Medicine will become a cornerstone of community healthcare in Northern Ontario.

Our education and training programs will span the life cycle of a physician practising in Northern Ontario. This begins with high school programs which encourage and support local and regional students to aspire to medicine and gain entry to universities for continuing their studies. Selection into our undergraduate medical program will favour those who are likely to thrive in the challenging Northern rural learning environments including northern Ontario applicants.

For the Health of our Communities

Shared knowledge, expertise and perspectives work together to create healthy communities -- socially, medically, economically and environmentally. Community participation is considered essential to the success of the Northern Ontario School of Medicine. With students distributed across the region, communities will have a vital role in welcoming and supporting students to ensure these students feel included in the community and develop a particular affinity for living and working in a rural community.

The Northern Ontario School of Medicine is committed to meeting the needs of the people of Northern Ontario. These are people living in areas like the amalgamated municipality of Red Lake, located 100 miles north of the Trans-Canada Highway. And those in areas like Hearst, a community of approximately 5,000 with rich Francophone heritage and rugged outdoor beauty. These are just two of the over 70 identified distributed clinical learning sites in which Northern medical students will live and learn.

Physician Recruitment and Retention

Research evidence shows that students who come from rural areas and who undertake their undergraduate and postgraduate education in rural areas are most likely to become rural physicians. Medical schools in Scandinavia, United States, the Philippines and Australia have been established to solve the undersupply of physicians in rural and remote parts of these countries. And they are doing just that.

Medical school admissions research also demonstrates that enrolment of Northern Ontario students in existing medical schools is at a ten year low. With a medical school to call our own, Northerners will have more opportunity to pursue medical education similar to those from other regions. The application process has been designed such that academic qualifications begin in the mid “B” range and are balanced by an interview process that seeks out qualities of ingenuity, openness to different cultures, and independence. Preference will be given for a well rounded pre-medical education including courses in humanities and social sciences in addition to the pure sciences. Two seats have been reserved for Aboriginal students and Franco-Ontarians will be represented in the class demographics.

“This has been an historic opportunity to create, here in Northern Ontario, the medical education environment proven to be successful in retaining talented rural doctors.”

Dr. Roger Strasser, Founding Dean
Economic and Research Benefits

Economic synergies with hospital partners, host communities and researchers are evolving and furthering Northern Ontario as a vibrant centre for rural and Northern health care innovation. Scientists from around the globe have relocated to Thunder Bay and Sudbury to teach at the School and to engage in areas of inquiry critical to the health of Northern residents. Over 600 clinicians across the North are committing to finding the time, energy and resources to become involved in teaching our students.

In collaboration with local researchers from the host universities and other field sites, School of Medicine faculty will develop research focused on Northern population health issues, cancer care, healthy aging and many other areas. For example, rates of diabetes, heart disease and cancer are much higher here than in the rest of the country and will provide the focus for research, discovery and investment. At the very least, the research environment will be enhanced and recruitment of professionals to live in the North will grow as a result.

Bursaries and Scholarships to Support the Future of Northern Medicine

Several key community groups across the North have come together or are joining forces to donate funds for student bursaries. Financial aid allows medical students to focus on their studies, research and clinical education. Gifts to the students of the Northern Ontario School of Medicine are truly gifts of a lifetime and further invest in the Northern dream of our own unique and special Medical School.

Gifts made now in honour of the charter class of 2005 will benefit classes for years to come. Support of student aid will further the goals of the students of the Northern Ontario School of Medicine and the communities served by the School.

Donations can be made towards an unrestricted scholarship and bursary fund endowment at either campus. This endowment will be used to fund bursaries distributed to students in financial need through an application process. In addition, named bursaries, scholarships and awards established in honour individuals or groups, create a meaningful legacy tied to the Northern Ontario School of Medicine.

“Having an opportunity to study medicine close to home is an exciting possibility for many northern students. To support the development of medical education in our community, the John Andrews Foundation has proudly established a scholarship that will be awarded annually for more than three decades to come.”

Allan G. McKitrick, Q.C.
Chairman of the Board, John Andrews Foundation