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# Northern Passages

Newsletter of the Northern Ontario School of Medicine

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Northern Ontario  
School of Medicine

West Campus  
Lakehead University  
955 Oliver Road  
Thunder Bay, ON P7B 5E1

Tel: 807-343-8992  
Fax: 807-346-7994

East Campus  
Laurentian University  
935 Ramsey Lake Road  
Sudbury, ON P3E 2C6  
Tel: 705-675-4883  
Fax: 705-675-4858

## Bursary Campaign to support students

Volunteers, donors and officials gathered on February 28 to launch the Northern Ontario School of Medicine Bursary Fund Campaign. With generous private donations totalling \$1.2 million, plus \$340,000 through the Ontario Student Opportunity Trust Fund already committed, the Campaign is on its way to reaching the \$5 million goal.

Gerry Lougheed Jr. and Greg Pilot are volunteer Co-Chairs of the campaign. Mr. Lougheed is Funeral Director and Vice-President of Lougheed's Limited. He has been a dedicated supporter of health care in the Sudbury region for over 20 years and is the recipient of the Ontario Medal for Good Citizenship. He feels that garnering support for the Charter Class, and all future students, is an important endeavour. "In August, students will begin studying to become physicians," he said. "We have an opportunity to invest in the future of health care by supporting them."



Gerry Lougheed Jr. addresses audiences in Sudbury and Thunder Bay

Mr. Pilot, Vice-President and Branch Manager of BMO Nesbitt Burns, is well known in Thunder Bay for his work with the United Way. He is excited about his role as Co-Chair of the campaign, and the financial backing received to date. "The donations already received from individuals, service clubs, associations, foundations and municipalities are a promising indicator of Northern Ontario's commitment," he said. "I am thrilled to see this level of enthusiasm from these donors, and hope that many others will follow their example."



Lakehead University President Dr. Fred Gilbert and School of Medicine Vice-Dean Dr. Dan Hunt accept a donation from John Andrews Foundation Directors Alexander Paterson, Dr. Donald Henderson and Allan G. McKitrick

Two prominent foundations have already made generous contributions. The F. Jean MacLeod Trust in Sudbury has committed \$500,000. Mary Bernardi, Chair of the MacLeod Trust says the donation is intended to benefit families in the North. "We know that students who study in the north are more likely to live and work in the North. We want to give medical students every opportunity to succeed. They are the future of health care in this region," she said.

The John Andrews Foundation in Thunder Bay pledged \$300,000. "The 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 over three decades," says Allan G. McKitrick, Chairman of the Foundation.

There are donation options for everyone. Individuals may donate independently, or together as a group to create bursary funds. Memorial awards may be established in honour of individuals who were passionate about the North or dedicated to health care. Further information about the Northern Ontario School of Medicine Bursary Fund can be obtained by contacting Jennifer Fawcett at (807) 766-7310 or Jennifer.Fawcett@normed.ca.



# Teaching Strategies for the Busy Clinician

## Case-Based Learning: The Cornerstone of Instruction at the Northern Ontario School of Medicine

### Why Case-Based learning?

Much of the Northern Ontario School of Medicine's first and second year curriculum will be delivered by case-based learning (CBL). Variations of CBL have been used in medical education for over thirty years with substantial research to support its use. CBL is essentially a model of instruction in which students learn in response to patients and problems presented within a very detailed context. Details are provided on issues such as culture, geography, population and public health. The student is responsible for identifying the relevant issues, researching and retrieving the relevant knowledge and information. Unlike traditional didactic teaching, the student is responsible for determining what the questions are before they provide the answers. The objectives are not given to the students prior to the small group sessions.

At the School of Medicine, patient cases are designed to ensure that objectives from the School's five themes are addressed. The themes are introduced to the students by means of case presentations which consist of several six-week long, case-based modules (CBM). The themes and many of their objectives will be continued into the subsequent Phases of the curriculum. This will ensure that topics will be discussed with increasing clinical relevance.

Case-based learning was chosen as a model of instruction as it ensures that students attend to their learning objectives while gaining an appreciation for the opportunities and challenges that are unique to the Northern Ontario context. This also promotes the integration of new information with previously acquired knowledge, making later retrieval more likely. Students, by virtue of solving problems, develop critical thinking and self-directed learning skills. Finally, CBL is highly motivating and consistently reported as an enjoyable way of learning by both students and faculty.

### How will Case-based learning be used?

The students analyze the case in groups of

eight that meet on a regular basis. The tutor, the faculty-member that supervises the sessions, is not necessarily an expert with respect to the issues at hand, although they have prior knowledge of the objectives of the case. Consequently, the tutor is not the one that provides the answers but can focus and facilitate discussion. Students are expected to elaborate on their prior knowledge in order to understand the problem. In the course of this process, they find out where they lack important information, resulting in the formulation of self-directed learning goals and objectives. The acquired insights are discussed in the next session. The cases provide students with the opportunity to identify what they want and need to learn and what faculty would want them to learn.

### How are the basic sciences taught using Case-based learning?

The basic medical sciences, known at the School of Medicine as the Foundations of Medicine Theme, are integrated within all of the cases and modules. This requires the participation of content experts from the various basic science disciplines to ensure that the students are exposed to all relevant topics. The students, with the assistance of the small group facilitator, identify, research and share the appropriate objectives.

### What other methods of instruction will be used?

In addition to the small group CBL sessions, clinical skills training, lectures and community placements are scheduled. A large proportion of the weekly schedule is reserved for independent self-study. Clinical teaching will be synchronized with the module topics. In the clinical skills training sessions, both volunteer and standardized patients will be used to ensure commonality and comprehensiveness of the learning experience.

### What is the role of the faculty member in Case-based learning?

Faculty members will act as facilitators for the small group sessions, as resource persons to create the cases and the means by which they are delivered, and as content experts to identify the objectives for the modules.

## Faculty Profile

Dr. Malvinder S. Parmar  
MB, MS, FRCP(C), FACP



Dr. Parmar is an Associate Professor in the Division of Clinical Sciences at the Northern Ontario School of Medicine.

He obtained his Bachelor of Medicine & Surgery and Master of Surgery from Meerut University in India and received Specialist Certification in Internal Medicine from the Royal College of Physicians & Surgeons of Canada (FRCPC) and American Board of Internal Medicine. He holds Nephrology certification from American Boards of Nephrology and is a Fellow of the American College of Physicians (FACP).

Dr. Parmar is an active researcher, including international clinical trials, and he has produced several publications. He is a member of reviewer panels for prestigious international journals such as the BMJ, Journal of Human Hypertension, Canadian Journal of Cardiology, and Medical Science Monitor. He is also member of the editorial board of Parkhurst Exchange.

Currently a consultant physician and director of dialysis at the Timmins & District Hospital in Timmins, Ontario, Dr. Parmar is the recipient of many awards. One of the prestigious awards he received was the Council Award of the College of Physicians & Surgeons of Ontario in 1998 -1999, the highest recognition honoring outstanding Ontario physicians for their excellence.

# Participants sought for patient programs

Two significant programs for the Northern Ontario School of Medicine were unveiled recently. Undergraduate Medical Education is actively recruiting candidates for Standardized Patient and Volunteer Patient Programs. "These programs are designed to provide a uniform experience to the medical students so that they will gain important interviewing and physical examination skills," Dr. Judy Baird, Clinical Skills Course Chair, explains. "We are hoping to recruit around 50 candidates for both programs by the end of August 2005."

Standardized patients are individuals who will role play a particular patient scenario, while the Volunteer Patients are individuals who have an actual disease and play themselves. A Standardized or Volunteer Patient will use a wide range of skills to assist the medical students to develop their communication skills and to perform physical examinations during their clinical studies.

In response to many enquiries, Baird pointed out that being a Standardized or Volunteer Patient may not be for everyone. "It takes energy, discipline, and excellent communication skills.

It also requires intense concentration while you are being interviewed or examined. When the encounter with the student is over you must be able to recall the performance and record it on a checklist." All this hard work is not for nothing. The patients will be paid for the time spent training and working!



For more information about the programs, please visit the School's website at: [www.normed.ca](http://www.normed.ca) or contact Sherry Carlucci at 705 662 7257 (East Campus) or Erica Dzuba at 807 766 7335 (West Campus). If you get a voicemail simply leave your name and address and we will mail an application to you.

L'école de médecine a annoncé deux programmes importants aujourd'hui. En effet, le Programme de formation médicale du premier cycle recrute des candidats pour ses programmes de patients normalisés et volontaires.

« Les deux programmes visent à offrir une expérience uniforme à des étudiants en médecine du premier cycle qui sont en train d'acquérir d'importantes compétences en entrevue et en examen des patients, » a expliqué la Dre Judy Baird, directrice des cours sur les compétences en clinique. « Nous espérons recruter une cinquantaine de candidats dans les deux programmes d'ici la fin août 2005 ».

Pour obtenir d'autres renseignements sur les programmes, consultez le site Web de l'école : [www.normed.ca](http://www.normed.ca) ou communiquez avec Sherry Carlucci, au (705) 662-7257 (campus de l'Est) ou avec Erica Dzuba, au (807) 766 7335 (campus de l'Ouest).

## State-of-the-art research facilities proposed

The Office of the Associate Dean of Research is working to secure funding to support the completion of state-of-the-art research facilities at both the East and West Campuses. Last fall a proposal entitled "Building Health Research Capacity in the North" was prepared that outlines an overall research strategy for the School, which is to be implemented in a phased approach. Phase One involves the completion of research laboratories on the third floor of the NOSM buildings currently under construction at Laurentian and Lakehead Universities. This infrastructure will provide our current and prospective faculty with the best environment in which to perform world-class biomedical research and will create a competitive advantage for pursuing biomedical research in the North. In Phase Two, the School will work with its partners to equip

numerous distributed research sites across Northern Ontario, strengthening the research capacity and connectedness throughout the North. Phase Two will help create new Northern partnerships in health research, positively affect the quality of life in the North and contribute to the growth of the Northern economy by generating opportunities for the commercialization of research knowledge and technologies through partnerships with the private sector.

In other Research news:

•The Office of the Associate Dean of Research is working to develop a Student Research Ethics Committee that will review student research projects involving humans. The committee will be responsible for ensuring the ethical conduct of any human research per-

formed by students of the School of Medicine, which will be especially important for students interested in undertaking research in consultation with Northern communities during their community placements. •Faculty members have been very busy preparing applications for external funding to support their research programs. Most recently, operating grant applications were sent to the Canadian Institutes of Health Research for research in areas as diverse as identifying nutritional factors in depression and the development of hypertension in early life. Since September, over ten applications have been submitted to federal granting agencies and foundations. We wish the faculty the best of success in their endeavors.