

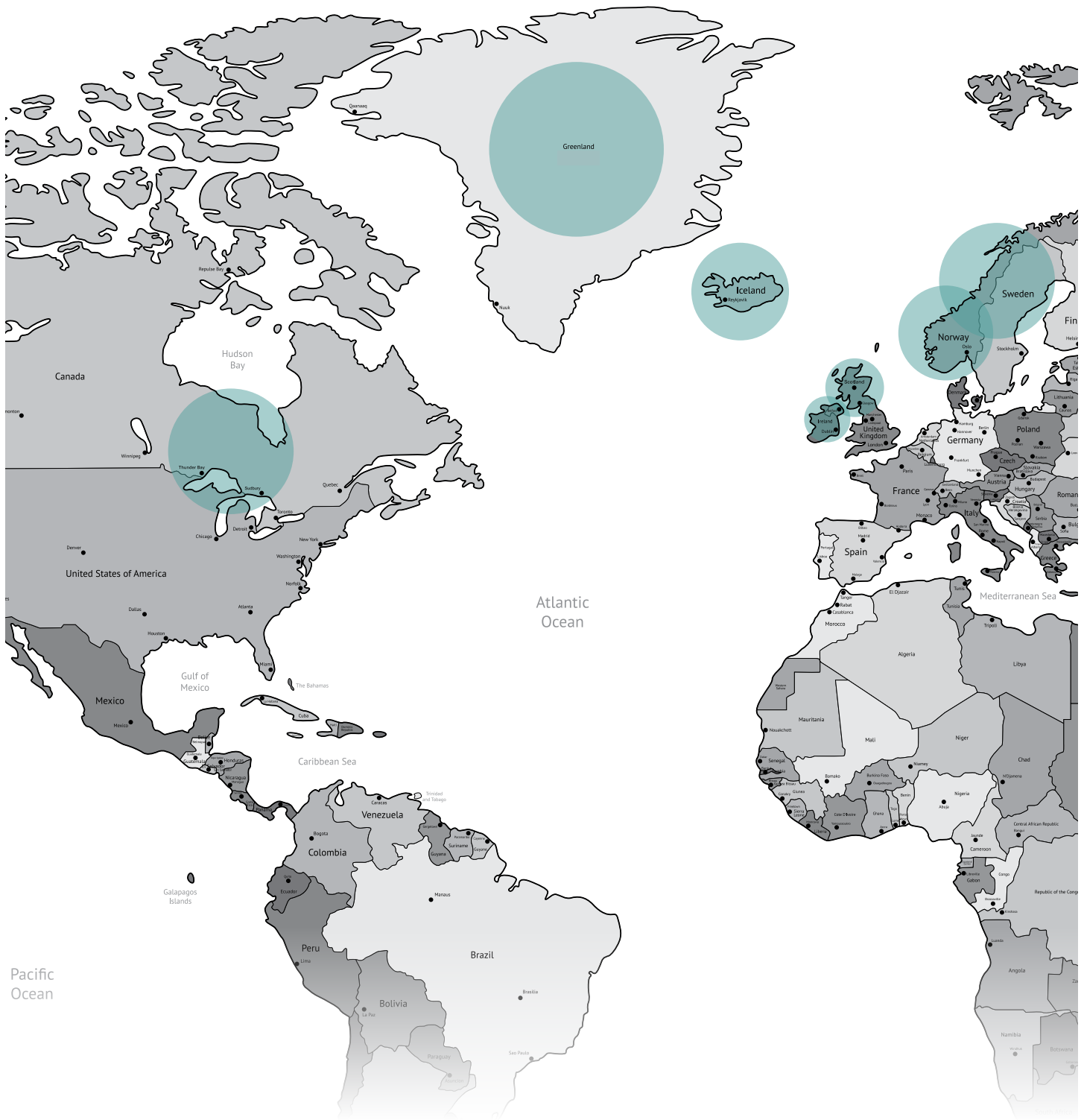


RECRUIT
& RETAIN



The Canadian Recruit and Retain Conference Report

Thunder Bay, Ontario, Canada
January 15-17, 2014



RECRUIT
& RETAIN



European Union
European Regional Development Fund



The Canadian Recruit and Retain Conference Report



Message from Dr. Roger Strasser Dean, Northern Ontario School of Medicine

The Northern Ontario School of Medicine (NOSM) was delighted to host the Canadian Recruit and Retain Conference from January 15-17, 2014, which brought together delegates from several northern European countries and Canada to share strategies for attracting health-care professionals and other public sector workers to underserved areas. NOSM's inclusion in the Recruit and Retain Project stems from its social accountability mandate responding to the health-care needs of rural and remote communities in Northern Ontario.

The conference provided an exciting opportunity to share, among the participants, best practices for ensuring that people—no matter where they live—have equal access to quality medical care. It is with sincere gratitude that I thank the Canadian Recruit and Retain Conference participants for attending and contributing to the many illuminating presentations and fruitful discussions regarding the recruitment and retention of health-care professionals in rural and remote communities. Thank you, too, to the Conference Organizing Committee for their work in organizing such an outstanding conference.

I look forward to NOSM's continued collaboration with the Recruit and Retain Project.



Message from Dr. Andrew Sim Director, Recruit and Retain Project

The Canadian Recruit and Retain Conference brought to Thunder Bay, Ontario, Canada partners from seven Northern European countries to meet with the eighth project partner from Canada, the Northern Ontario School of Medicine, as an important part of the European Regional Development Fund funded Northern Periphery Programme project, "Recruit and Retain."

This coming together of minds, cultures, and expertise to address the burgeoning difficulties of recruiting and retaining public sector workers in remote rural areas demonstrates how this unique project produces a constructive and coordinated synergy of products and services designed to encourage recruitment and enhance retention.

This is all encapsulated in the conference declaration—*Canadian Recruit and Retain Conference Statement—Remote Rural Recruitment Retention Recommendations*, which is included in this conference report.

Thank you to all participants of this exceptional conference.

Conference Host

The Northern Ontario School of Medicine

The Canadian Recruit and Retain Conference was held as part of the European Union-funded project known as Recruit and Retain (recruitandretain.eu) of which the Northern Ontario School of Medicine (NOSM) is the only non-European partner. The focus of this project is on the recruitment and retention of health workers and other public sector workers in the remote and rural parts of the far north of northern countries in Europe. Most project partners are agencies equivalent to the regional health authority partners in the Canadian Foundation for Healthcare Improvement (CFHI) Northern, Rural or Remote Collaboration. Participating countries are Sweden, Norway, Iceland, Greenland, Scotland, Northern Ireland, and the Republic of Ireland.

The Northern Ontario School of Medicine is the first medical school to open in Canada in over 30 years. Since its official opening in 2005, the School has developed and delivered a distinctive model of distributed, community-engaged, socially accountable medical education and research. NOSM has campuses at Lakehead University in Thunder Bay and Laurentian University in Sudbury, with over 95 teaching and research sites across Northern Ontario. NOSM is a made-in-the-North solution that is attracting attention from around the world for its innovative model. In a very short time, NOSM has become a world leader in community-engaged medical education and research, while staying true to its social accountability mandate of contributing to improving the health of the people and communities of Northern Ontario.

NOSM's inclusion in the Recruit and Retain Project stems from its social accountability mandate responding to the health-care needs of rural and remote communities in Northern Ontario.

nosm.ca



Northern Ontario
School of Medicine
École de médecine
du Nord de l'Ontario
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Opening Remarks



Tom Chisel
NOSM Elder

Traditional healer and NOSM Elder Tom Chisel of the Lac Seul First Nation opened the conference by saying a prayer, singing to the creator,

and wishing the participants a successful and productive conference.

“Before the sun comes up, there is always a star that comes before it. The song to welcome this conference is about the morning star. It rises first every morning, and watches over us as the sun rises.”

– Elder Tom Chisel



Chief Georgann Morriseau
Chief, Fort William First Nation

The Canadian Recruit and Retain Conference took place on the traditional land of the Fort William First Nation.

Chief Georgann Morriseau welcomed conference participants to her nation's traditional land.

“There are many challenges to providing rural and remote care that face our Aboriginal and rural communities in Northern Ontario— most importantly, limited access. I look forward to working together with you to move forward with our health priorities. Welcome to the Fort William land, not only as our guests, but as our friends.”

– Chief Georgann Morriseau



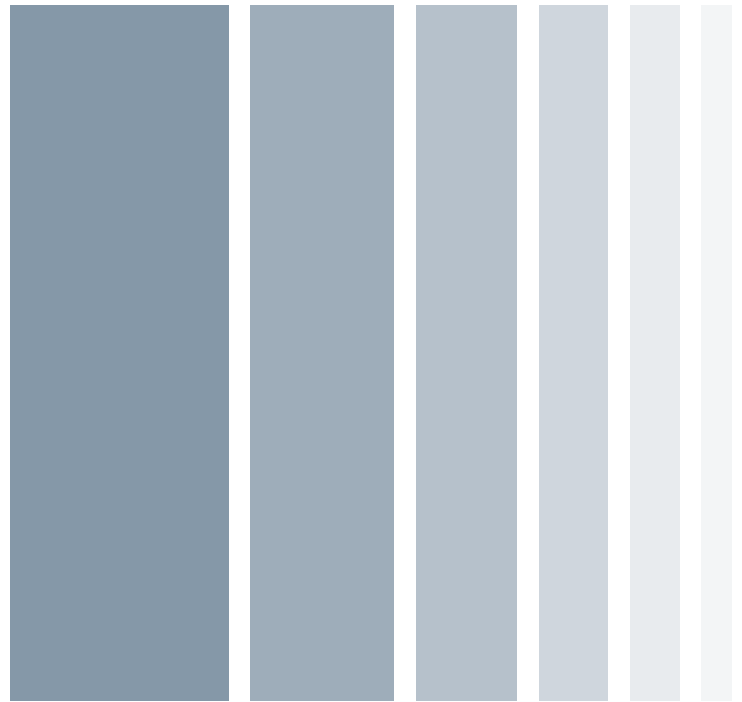
Brian McKinnon
Acting Mayor, Thunder Bay

On behalf of the City of Thunder Bay, Brian McKinnon welcomed international delegates and emphasized

the importance of recruitment and retention in Northern locations.

“Northern communities like ours have a lot to offer. It is our job to get that message out—to attract new doctors and health workers to our cities. We hope that, by the end of the conference, we will have some brilliant ideas that we can institute across the world to help with recruitment and retention.”

– Acting Mayor Brian McKinnon



Keynote Address

Dr. David Snadden

Executive Associate Dean, Education
University of British Columbia, Faculty of Medicine

Has the University of British Columbia's Northern Medical Program Made Any Difference?

Education is an integral piece of recruitment and retention in northern, rural, and remote communities. In his plenary presentation, Dr. David Snadden discussed the structure, history, and successes of the University of British Columbia's (UBC) Northern Medical Program (NMP)—a distributed medical education program that spans more than 80 teaching sites across British Columbia.

Similar to the Northern Ontario School of Medicine, UBC's NMP came together as a result of community action. Citizens of northern British Columbia rallied to pressure the government to improve their access to care. As a result, UBC expanded its programs with a northern and rural focus. Since its creation, the NMP and its partner communities have increased social pride, fostered integral health and education partnerships, stimulated economic benefit, improved physician morale in rural areas, and most notably, increased physician recruitment in rural and remote areas. According to Snadden, a major factor of the NMP's success in physician recruitment in rural and remote British Columbia is "choosing the right students, and giving them the right experiences."

UBC's program was built on the theoretical concept of social capital—forms of social participation that facilitate cooperation for a common objective. After ten years of spending social capital on physician recruitment, Snadden and his colleagues are turning their focus towards "the next piece of the puzzle"—namely, how the NMP can influence long-term retention by renewing social capital and community engagement.

"We are finding that people are more likely to end up where you train them. There is no doubt that we change the environment of the health-care system just by having students in northern communities. Ten years ago, we had a severe shortage of doctors in our region. We are beginning to change that."

– Dr. David Snadden

Plenary Speakers

Canada's Recruitment and Retention Strategies

During the morning of Thursday, January 16, 2014, delegates were introduced to Canadian recruitment and retention strategies in northern, rural, and remote communities.



Dr. David Marsh

Associate Dean, Community Engagement
Northern Ontario School of Medicine

Principles of Community Engagement

The Northern Ontario School of Medicine (NOSM) was created to improve the health outcomes of Northern Ontarians, especially Aboriginals and Francophones. During his plenary presentation, Dr. David Marsh spoke about NOSM's distinct model of community engagement, used to improve health care in Northern Ontario. Activities at NOSM (including education and governance) are conducted based on guidance and advice from of the communities the School serves. NOSM students are invited into a variety of Northern Ontario communities throughout the duration of their training to ensure that they develop a keen understanding of the factors influencing the health of their future patients. In addition, Marsh discussed the School's goal through community engagement to provide transformative education: that which transforms traditional ideas about health professional education, but that also produces graduates who are capable and prepared to transform the health-care system in which they work, for the betterment of their communities.

"At NOSM, we focus on collaboration and empowerment. We aim to understand our communities as best we can. We ask our communities for their opinions and advice, and implement what they recommend. This is not how most academic organizations engage with the population, but it is a practice we feel very strongly about."

– Dr. David Marsh



Dr. Nick Busing

Past President and CEO of the Association
of Faculties of Medicine of Canada

The Future of Postgraduate Medical Education

Canada, with its vast geography and its relatively low population density, provides many challenges to providing equal access to health care. Dr. Nick Busing spoke with delegates about the future of postgraduate medical education in Canada. Busing shared with delegates the highlights of the Association of Faculties of Medicine of Canada's (AFMC) *Collective Vision for Postgraduate Medical Education in Canada*, paying specific attention to the recommendations in the report that will address the needs of rural, remote, and northern communities. Of the 10 recommendations made by the AFMC, four emphasize the importance of meeting the needs of northern, rural, and remote populations by focusing on: meeting societal needs, cultivating social accountability, developing positive learning and work environments, and supporting clinical teachers. Through his discussion of these various recommendations, Busing provided delegates—both Canadian and international—with strategies for meeting future needs via health-professional education.

"One hundred years after Flexner's report, we thought 'We're doing a damn good job educating physicians. But there are things we could do better.' As a result, we have created a collective vision of where we want medical education to go to ensure that our graduates meet the needs of the Canadian people. It's a vision shared by all Canadian medical schools."

– Dr. Nick Busing



Jeff Goodyear

Director, Health Workforce Policy Branch
Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care

Improving Evidence-Informed Physician Human Resource Planning

Ensuring that there is the appropriate mix and distribution of health-care professionals is a complex task. Jeff Goodyear introduced delegates to the work of HealthForceOntario (HFO)—the province’s strategy for ensuring equitable access to health-care professionals. Since their establishment in 2006, HFO has developed a database that provides information about the location, specialty, age, and language of physicians across the province to inform human resource planning. With this information, HFO has begun analyzing population predictions, projected health needs, regional requirements, and many other factors to advise the government about how to support the right mix and distribution of health-care professionals in the future. Goodyear encouraged international delegates to collect data about the number, location, and specialty of health-care professionals in their country, and recommended that they use this information to inform local and regional planning.

“We need to foster a culture of evidence-informed planning to meet the needs of the province, the region, and the individual community. We have to be able to have conversations about the type of health-care professionals we need, when we need them, and where we need them. You can’t move forward unless you know what you’re dealing with.”

– Jeff Goodyear



Erin Leith

Director, Collaboration for Innovation and Improvement, Canadian Foundation for Healthcare Improvement

Fraser Bell

Vice President, Planning and Quality,
Northern Health Authority, British Columbia



Northern, Rural, and Remote Collaboration Initiative

Around the world, northern rural and remote regions have more similarities than differences. Erin Leith and Fraser Bell shared the experiences of the Canadian Foundation for Healthcare Improvement (CFHI) and the Northern Health Authority (NHA) in celebrating northern practice and supporting national and regional health care-related collaboration. Leith and Bell discussed the ways in which CFHI and the NHA encourage collaboration among communities, agencies, regions, and provinces for the improvement of patient outcomes. Rather than seeing northern, rural, and remote health care as a problem that needed to be solved, Bell and Leith invited delegates to view the rural and remote context as a unique opportunity for innovation, empowerment, and the development of partnerships that would not be possible without a shared goal.

“We focus on the promotion and spread of innovation, good ideas, and best practices.”

– Erin Leith

“Some rural communities don’t have a hand specialist. Why do we have to apologize for that? The generalist perspective is a real strength of our rural jurisdiction. We can help people develop specific skills. It’s an enhanced primary-care focus of which we should be proud.”

– Fraser Bell

Morning Breakout Sessions

After hearing from plenary speakers in the morning about Canadian strategies for recruitment and retention, delegates broke up into four small groups to expand on the themes of the morning: community engagement, post-graduate education, human resource planning, and northern collaboration initiatives. In their small groups, participants identified knowledge gaps, shared individual experiences, asked questions of international colleagues, and provided each other with advice. At the end of these discussions, all conference delegates reconvened to share the insights and information of the break-out discussions with the larger group.

Plenary Speakers

International Recruitment and Retention Strategies

During the afternoon of Thursday, January 16, delegates were introduced to the international strategy for the development of northern, rural, and remote communities.



Dr. Andrew Sim
Director, Recruit and Retain Project

Northern Periphery Programme

The Northern Periphery Programme is a transnational initiative to develop Europe’s northern periphery, and harness the yet-untapped economic, social, and environmental potential of European northern, rural, remote communities. Dr. Andrew Sim summarized the Northern Periphery Programme, under which the Recruit and Retain Project is one initiative. Sim explained that the Programme aims to promote innovation, develop networks, and stimulate transnational collaboration among remote and peripheral areas. Sim’s description of the broader scope of the Northern Periphery Programme demonstrated the role that the Recruit and Retain Project has to play in a larger strategy for developing and supporting peripheral locations.

“Integration of the Northern Periphery Programme has been a great success. The concentrated efforts of the Recruit and Retain Project have allowed us to develop strategic activities that provide tangible results.”

– Dr. Andrew Sim



Deanne Gilbert
Manager, Recruit and Retain Project

Recruit and Retain Project

The Recruit and Retain Project was created to find solutions to the persistent difficulties in recruiting and retaining high-quality, front-line health-care and public-sector workers in rural and remote areas of northern Europe. Deanne Gilbert presented delegates with the broad goals of the project and the many strategies it has used to improve recruitment and retention in northern Europe. Among the many foci, the project concentrates on the development of products, services, and strategies to combat personal and professional isolation. It also sets out to support professionals to develop the necessary and specialized knowledge and skill required to work in rural areas.

“It has been abundantly clear in media coverage over the last few years that employers and governments must listen to the views of rural residents. The Recruit and Retain Project is one of the ways that we’re trying to find solutions to the challenges faced by northern, rural citizens.”

– Deanne Gilbert



Dr. Roger Strasser

Dean, Northern Ontario School of Medicine

The Canadian Contribution to the Recruit and Retain Project

Education has a significant part to play in the recruitment and retention of health-care workers. Dr. Roger Strasser shared predominant research about the role of education in recruitment and retention, and shared many of the successful strategies that the Northern Ontario School of Medicine is using to attract people to practice in Northern Ontario, and to keep them there. Strasser shared with international delegates the factors that facilitate recruitment to Northern practice: namely, a rural upbringing, positive clinical experiences in rural settings, and targeted training for rural practice. Retention, on the other hand, requires academic involvement, recognition and reward, support from “the system,” and active community engagement. In order to be successful, Strasser invited participants to challenge conventional wisdom in order to develop innovative strategies for recruiting and retaining rural and remote workers.

“In the early days, many people told us that there would never be a medical school in Northern Ontario. Since the Northern Ontario School of Medicine’s creation, there has been a sense of empowerment that has emerged across the region. People believe that if we can establish a medical school here, we can do anything. My advice to you is to keep your eyes on the prize. Set your own standards, and hold strong in achieving your goals.”

– Dr. Roger Strasser



Presenters (top left to bottom right): Dr. Sigurður E. Sigurðsson, Barbara Isaacs, Dr. Mante Hedman, Wesley Henderson, Marianne Vanem, Niclas Forsling.

Recruit and Retain Project – Focused Strategies

International members of the Recruit and Retain Project presented delegates with specialized and focused strategies for improving recruitment and retention in rural and remote areas. Based on research and extensive surveying, presenters discussed:

- Reducing professional isolation through access to professional development, academic institutions, innovative technology, and services that increase collaboration.
- Reducing personal isolation by integrating new recruits into new communities, sharing ‘insider knowledge’ about their new home, promoting social events, and supporting spousal employment.
- Targeting strategies for recruitment towards women and younger professionals, who seem most open to relocating.
- Focusing on the benefits of living in rural and remote communities (including increased activity and sense of community).
- Creating a central website that provides job information, targeted promotional materials, and resources for social support.
- Creating cross-jurisdictional services and interprofessional teams that span across many sectors.

Afternoon Breakout Sessions

As in the morning, participants broke into four small groups to expand on topics raised during the presentations that afternoon. With a goal of reporting back to their colleagues, participants investigated four areas of the Recruit and Retain Project strategy: analyzing and interpreting survey data, personal and professional supports, online recruitment, and the broader public sector. Together, participants shared successes from their own contexts, gathered multiple perspectives on complex issues, and built upon individual strategies presented throughout the day. After an hour of collaboration, the large group reunited and shared the outcomes of each group’s discussion.



Conference Dinner – A Spotlight on Culture

Delegates were introduced to the diverse and unique culture of Northern Ontario during dinner and festivities on Thursday, January 16. The meal was introduced by Bruce Hyer, Thunder Bay's federal Member of Parliament, who thanked delegates for their important work in promoting improved access to health care.

After breaking bread together over dinner, delegates experienced a performance by the traditional Aboriginal singers and dancers, the Dark Cloud Community Drummers. The performance quickly became participatory when delegates were invited to dance with the entertainers. By the end of the evening, not a single delegate remained in their seat.

Site Tours

During the morning of Friday, January 17, conference delegates toured sites in Thunder Bay to understand how recruitment, retention, health services, education, and research are conducted to meet the needs of communities in Northern Ontario.

Thunder Bay Regional Health Services Centre



The Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre (TBRHSC) is a state-of-the-art, acute-care facility serving more than 250,000 in a geographical catchment area the size of France. Delegates toured the facility to experience one of NOSM's academic teaching hospitals, and to learn about how primary care is provided to meet the needs of such a large area. In addition, participants were introduced

to the Ontario Telemedicine Network (OTN), a world leader in telemedicine that is used extensively at TBRHSC. Using innovative technology, OTN provides telemedicine solutions for health-care organizations and professionals that help bridge the gap of time and distance to ensure patients receive the care they need.

Northern Ontario School of Medicine



Delegates were warmly welcomed to the Northern Ontario School of Medicine's West Campus at Lakehead University in Thunder Bay. Delegates were introduced to the campus and the realities of providing medical education in a distributed, community-engaged model. Of specific focus were the education labs where NOSM students learn major body systems, diagnostics, and clinical procedures, as well as the

NOSM research labs. Delegates explored the ways in which NOSM uses innovative technology to unite the medical school's learners, researchers, and faculty across the province.

St. Joseph's Care Group

As part of their discovery of health care in Thunder Bay, delegates visited the St. Joseph's Care Group (SJCG). St. Joseph's Care Group is a Catholic organization that identifies and responds to the unmet needs of the people of Northwestern Ontario. It provides client-centred care for seniors, those suffering from chronic disease, and patients with mental illness and addictions. Delegates toured the facilities, which focus on improving access to health care for communities across Northwestern Ontario.

Anishnawbe Mushkiki Aboriginal Health Access Centre



In order to demonstrate the importance of socially accountable health care and education, delegates toured the Anishnawbe Mushkiki Aboriginal Health Access Centre. The centre provides holistic health care, including primary, traditional, and alternative approaches. The services of the health centre include clinical care, education, as well as health intervention and prevention. The Anishnawbe Mushkiki

Aboriginal Health Access Centre empowers Aboriginal people in Northwestern Ontario to live holistic, healthy, and harmonious lives.

Canada's Favourite Sport



A trip to Canada would not be complete without a good, old-fashioned game of hockey. After the conference, delegates headed to Fort William Gardens to watch the Lakehead University Thunderwolves duke it out on the ice with the Ryerson University Rams.

Canadian Recruit and Retain Conference Statement

Remote Rural Recruitment Retention Recommendations

The Canadian Recruit and Retain Conference brought together seven European partners from the Recruit and Retain Northern Periphery Programme project (funded from the Europe and Regional Development Fund) with Canadian colleagues to share experiences and initiatives focused on the recruitment and retention of health and other public sector workers in the remote rural parts of the far north of northern countries in Europe and in Canada. The Canadian Foundation for Healthcare Improvement (CFHI) joined the Northern Ontario School of Medicine (NOSM) in hosting the conference, which took place in Thunder Bay, Ontario, January 15-17, 2014.

Plenary presentations and parallel sessions explored key issues and identified important priorities for successful workforce retention and recruitment in remote rural areas. As a result, we, the conference participants, present the following observations and recommendations.

Observations

- **Access** to health care is **the** remote rural health issue.
- Overproduction of health professionals in urban areas does not overflow into remote rural areas and does not resolve health workforce challenges or ensure that remote rural health services address community needs.
- The issues and opportunities for recruitment and retention for the broader public sector in remote rural areas are similar to the health sector.
- Remote rural areas across Canada and Northern Europe have more in common than differences.
- There is no single solution to resolve the inadequate workforce supply.
- The interplay of influencing factors vary over time and each factor requires a specific strategy. Multiple initiatives that each brings incremental improvements ensure an overall major impact.
- Distributed education and training initiatives in remote rural areas are necessary to achieve successful retention and recruitment but are not sufficient on their own.

Recommendations

- Build partnerships and collaborations across remote rural areas to contribute to successful retention and recruitment in both the health and broader public sectors.
- Establish cross jurisdictional collaborations to enhance successful recruitment and retention initiatives.
- Create service models in remote rural communities that are developed locally to respond to community needs.
- Use robust data that are enhanced and interpreted by local knowledge in Human Resource planning.
- Engage communities, in the form of active community participation, to contribute to successful retention and recruitment, as well as to enhanced education and services.
- Develop initiatives that address both family and social issues, as well as personal and professional aspects of working in remote rural areas, to contribute to the successful retention and recruitment of health and public sector workers.
- Focus on responding to community needs, including opportunities for enhanced skills training and support systems for remote rural career development, in postgraduate education for remote rural health care.
- Provide mentoring for new recruits into remote rural health practice.
- Tailor enhanced skills training for established rural practitioners.
- Connect integrated networks of expertise across remote rural areas to add strength to postgraduate education and service delivery.
- Use communication technology to greatly enhance education, professional support, mentoring, networking and family support across and between remote rural areas, which strengthens both professional and social connectedness.

Conclusion

The Canadian Recruit and Retain Conference created a network of individuals and organizations linked by a common purpose and commitment to success in recruitment and retention of health and other public sector workers in remote rural areas.

We commend these observations and recommendations to public sector agencies, governments and others with an interest in achieving a sustainable and high quality remote rural workforce.

Thunder Bay, Ontario, Canada
January 2014

Thank You

Many individuals and organizations came together to make the Canadian Recruit and Retain Conference a resounding success.

Thanks are extended to all delegates for their attendance and outstanding participation.

Conference Organizing Committee

- Dr. Roger Strasser
- Grace Vita
- Nicole Lauzon
- Dr. David Marsh
- Erin Leith
- Vin Auld
- Dr. Behdin Nowrouzi
- Kirby Kirvan

Conference Partners



Northern Ontario
School of Medicine
École de médecine
du Nord de l'Ontario
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European Union
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Northern
Periphery
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Innovatively investing
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Tour Hosts



ST. JOSEPH'S CARE GROUP



THUNDER BAY
**Regional
Health**
SCIENCES CENTRE



Anishnawbe Mushkiki Aboriginal
Health Access Centre

The conference partners would like to thank the Northern Periphery Programme under the auspices of the European Commission's Territorial Cooperation Objective for funding this project.