

OUR DOCS TEACH! PHYSICIAN APPRECIATION WEEK



David Gravelle

Each year around this time we stage Physician Appreciation Week activities to celebrate the work of our primary care providers, specialists in our general hospital, and psychiatrists at Waypoint. It's an opportunity to say thank you, but also a chance to profile some of the work they do.

The family physicians profiled in these pages are new to our area. They've stepped in to replace retiring or relocating doctors as part of our succession planning efforts. Over the years I've learned there are many facets to physician recruitment. Having a strong pipeline of talented candidates to replace departing physicians is critical so we don't create unnecessary angst amongst patients who could end up orphaned.

This year, the OUR DOCS ROCK supplement in The Mirror is being re-titled OUR DOCS TEACH to reflect the fantastic work our physicians do as preceptors to medical students, clerks and residents.

Five years ago, our family physician recruitment program implemented a new strategy to attract new young physicians to our community.

Thanks to a major contribution by the Rotary Club of Midland, we launched the "Rotary Recruitment Through Education" effort. The cornerstone of this partnership with our medical schools, hospitals, clinics, and the Rural Ontario Medicine Program has been and continues to be our local physicians.

We have now re-branded our efforts to OUR DOCS TEACH. You will see these words in social media with the twitter hashtag #ourdocsteach, and you will see it on many of our promotional items we use to market our community to physician candidates.

Last week, our community hosted the 11th annual Rural Medicine Week. Eleven first-year medical students from Queen's University, the Northern Ontario School of Medicine (NOSM), and the University of Ottawa spent a week living and learning in our family medicine clinics and hospitals. They are the initial members of our long-term physician supply pipeline. Three years ago, we partnered with NOSM to stage the Comprehensive Community Clerkship for third-year medical students. This is part of our mid-range plan. Each July, two rural family medicine residents from the University of Toronto spend their final year of training in Midland/Penetanguishene. This rotation has proven extremely successful as we've retained an overwhelming number of these trainees. We also have numerous elective rotations throughout the year in

family medicine, emergency medicine, hospitalist, surgery and psychiatry, among others.

All of these learning opportunities have positioned the Midland/Penetanguishene area to become one of the premier rural academic training sites in the province. Interactions with medical students and residents take time, patience, and a skill to impart knowledge in positive manner. Our physicians, whether they are family doctors in clinics or specialists, have embraced this focused strategy, and it's paying dividends.

I am also extremely thankful to the volunteers and community stakeholders for their support and engagement in physician recruitment. A few volunteers have moved on to support other causes, so a big THANK YOU to Sandra Boucher, Jane Barnett, Judy Galloway, Mary Sallinen and Glenn and Judy Howard.

Glenn and his family will be continuing the legacy of Wayne and Sherry Middaugh's Celebrity Invitational Golf Tournaments supporting Georgian Bay General Hospital. Meanwhile the OUR DOCS GOLF Charity Classic in support of Family Physician Recruitment will be continuing on and will be held at the Midland Golf and Country Club on Friday, August 12. Once again, the presenting sponsor is Scotiabank. If you would like to participate as a player contact Teresa Grattan at grattans@sympatico.ca or to sponsor contact me at gravelled@gbgh.on.ca or 705-526-1300 X 5466.