



Government of Yukon

Government of Yukon » July 2010 » News Release #10-130

Newsroom

Latest news releases

News by theme

News by department

- Community Services
- Economic Development
- Education
- Energy, Mines and Resources
- Environment
- Executive Council Office
- Finance
- French Language Services Directorate
- Health and Social Services
- Highways and Public Works
- Justice
- Public Service Commission
- Tourism and Culture
- Women's Directorate

News by corporations

Yukon Development Corporation

Yukon Energy Corporation

Yukon Housing Corporation

Yukon Liquor Corporation

Yukon Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board

Joint news releases

Premier's News

News by date

2017 news releases

January

February

March

April

May

June

July

August

September

October

November

December

News archive



NEWSrelease

FOR RELEASE #10-130

July 8, 2010

Medical studies agreement with Memorial University

WHITEHORSE – Health and Social Services Minister Glenn Hart and Education Minister Patrick Rouble today announced an arrangement with Newfoundland's Memorial University's School of Medicine for a Yukon medical student to start in August 2011. This one year agreement is intended to become a long-term agreement.

The Memorial University of Newfoundland is one of 17 Canadian medical schools. It has a unique focus on rural family medicine with students largely coming from rural areas and who are likely to practice in a rural, remote or home communities. Compared to other Canadian medical schools, Memorial has the highest percentage of graduates choosing to train to become rural family doctors and the highest proportion of graduates who establish practice in rural communities.

"Of the four to eight seats for out-of-province students, Memorial generally receives approximately 500 applications, yet they are prepared to guarantee one seat for a Yukon medical student, providing the applicant meets the usual prerequisites," Hart said.

The minister shares the view of the local medical community that the best source of new physicians in the territory are those who grew up here and will return to make their careers.

"This is another example of the government working to prepare Yukon students for Yukon opportunities," Rouble said. "The students who benefit from this program will commit to working in Yukon for a minimum of three years."

This initiative has received strong support from the local medical community who will need to provide clinical practicums for students.

"The Yukon Medical Association supports the efforts of government to develop local students wishing to have careers in Yukon as doctors so that our communities will continue to have a source of physicians in the future," Yukon Medical Association president Dr. Rao Tadepalli said.

"We are happy to support the Yukon government in its quest to maintain a supply of physicians in the future," Dr. James Rourke, dean of medicine at Memorial University, said. "Our program is specifically designed to attract medical students who want to build opportunities in rural Canada or the North. I think this partnership between Yukon and Memorial will be a very good thing. We anticipate the arrangement for this year will set a template for a long-term productive agreement."

The Yukon will pay \$50,000 per year per student accepted. If no student applies, or meets the standards, there will be no cost that year.

Securing a permanent spot at a Canadian medical school is part of the Department of Health and Social Services' recruitment initiative to support local physicians. At present the department is supporting eight medical students at universities across Canada.

-30-

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