



UNIVERSITY OF
SASKATCHEWAN

College of Medicine

IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
October 24, 2016

NEW DOCTORS PRACTISING IN SASKATOON HEALTH REGION

Patients in communities throughout Saskatchewan continue to benefit from better access to physician care. New family doctors are now practising in Lanigan, Warman and Wynyard, thanks to the most recent results of the Saskatchewan International Physician Practice Assessment (SIPPA) program.

Dr. Chander Sharma (Lanigan), Dr. Inder Roop Ghuman (Warman) and Dr. Akram Abdulkareem (Wynyard) join many other International Medical Graduate (IMG) colleagues already practising in Saskatchewan. SIPPA is a unique made-in-Saskatchewan program that assesses IMGs on their education and clinical ability before allowing them to practise medicine. Since the program began in 2011, more than 190 new family physicians have completed the assessment and are currently practising in the province.

"Access to physician care continues to improve for people all across Saskatchewan because of SIPPA," Rural and Remote Health Minister Greg Ottenbreit said. "We value internationally trained physicians, and we welcome them to our province. In total, we have nearly 650 more doctors practising in Saskatchewan than we did nine years ago."

In addition, a total of 12 new international medical graduates from the September intake of SIPPA are now completing their field assessments. If successful, these family physicians will begin practising across the province this winter.

"At SIPPA, we are pleased to support Saskatchewan's need for physicians in communities across the province," SIPPA Medical Director for the College of Medicine at the University of Saskatchewan Dr. Jon Witt said. "We currently have 12 new IMGs enrolled in the SIPPA program and we look forward to seeing them practising in our province soon."

"The SIPPA Assessment Program has been an invaluable tool for us as we work to create strong health care teams across all our communities in Saskatoon Health Region," Saskatoon Health Region Physician Recruiter Jackie McKee said. "Having these physicians successfully complete the program and being able to provide them with the opportunity to bring their skills to the people in their new communities and deliver exceptional health care shows how working together helps foster better health care delivery for our entire province."

"Saskdocs works closely with each SIPPA candidate to help guide them through the application process," Saskdocs' Interim CEO Erin Brady said. "There's a lot of back and forth involved between us and the candidates, but now when we see them practising

medicine here we know the effort was worth it. They are excited to practise and we're excited to have them."

In addition to attracting IMGs, Saskatchewan is making progress in keeping more locally-trained family medicine graduates in the province. The retention rate of family medicine graduates trained at the University of Saskatchewan has jumped by 17 per cent over the past three years – from 58 per cent to 75 per cent.

Physicians interested in working in Saskatchewan are encouraged to contact saskdocs directly at info@saskdocs.ca or call toll-free (in North America) 1-888-415-3627 or 306-933-5000.

- 30 -

For more information, contact:

James Winkel
Saskdocs
Saskatoon
Phone: 306-933-5094

Tyler McMurchy
Communications Branch
Saskatchewan Health
Regina
Phone: (306) 787-4083

Jennifer Thoma
University of Saskatchewan
Saskatoon
Phone: 306-966-1851