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## **NEW DOCTORS PRACTISING IN HEARTLAND HEALTH REGION**

Residents across Saskatchewan continue to benefit from better access to physician care. New family doctors are now practising in Biggar and Kindersley, thanks to the most recent results of the Saskatchewan International Physician Practice Assessment (SIPPA) program.

Dr. John Khella (Biggar), Dr. Sudarshan Das, Dr. Samir Dawood, and Dr. Surekha Pandipati (Kindersley) are among 14 International Medical Graduates (IMGs) who have completed the most recent assessment and are starting practice in communities around the province. SIPPA is a unique made-in-Saskatchewan program that assesses IMGs on their education and clinical ability before allowing them to practise medicine in the province. Since the program began in 2011, 210 new family physicians have completed the assessment and are currently practising in the province.

"Internationally trained physicians play an important role in our health care system, and we welcome them to Saskatchewan," Health Minister Jim Reiter said. "Thanks to the SIPPA program, along with our other recruitment initiatives, we have over 750 more doctors practising today than we did 10 years ago."

In addition to those physicians who just completed their assessment, a further 14 IMGs are doing their field assessments. If successful, these family physicians will begin practising across the province this fall.

"SIPPA is very pleased to support Saskatchewan's need for physicians in communities across the province," Medical Director of SIPPA for the College of Medicine, University of Saskatchewan Dr. Jon Witt said. "We are helping to create a sustainable physician workforce for Saskatchewan, while offering rural, regional/urban and emergency room experience to all candidates to support them in their future practice environment."

"Heartland Health Region is very pleased to have four new physicians from the SIPPA program joining us in June," Heartland Health Region's Interim CEO Gayle Riendeau said. "These additional physicians will assist us in our goal of ensuring sustainable primary health care services are available for the communities of Kindersley and Biggar and their surrounding areas. I am sure they will receive a warm Heartland welcome!"

"Saskdocs is once again pleased to hear about all of the international medical graduates becoming part of the province's health care workforce," Saskdocs' CEO Erin Brady said. "These IMGs play an important role, as do their professional colleagues who all help to deliver high-quality, team-based care to the people of Saskatchewan, especially those living in rural and remote communities."

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 over the past four years from 58 per cent to 93 per cent.

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

- 30 -

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