

# **TRAINING PHYSICIANS FOR RURAL AND REMOTE SETTINGS IN CANADA AND AUSTRALIA**

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# Northern Ontario Medical School

## Two Main Hubs

**Sudbury** (Sudbury Regional Hospital, NOMECH, Laurentian University)

**Thunder Bay** (Thunder Bay Regional Hospital, NOMP, Lakehead University)

## Five Regional Learning Centres

Sioux Lookout, Kenora, North Bay, Timmins, Sault Ste. Marie



# New Visions of Rural Medical Education

## **James Cook University**

To pursue excellence and provide leadership in medical education and research. In particular, programs will be responsive to the health needs of the communities of northern Australia and the School will be a leader in the focus areas of rural and remote health, indigenous health and tropical medicine for Australia and for the wider Asia-Pacific region.

## **Northern Ontario Medical School**

A medical school like no other, NOMS will have a strong emphasis on the special features of Northern Ontario. These include: a diversity of cultures - aboriginal, francophone, remote communities, small town rural, large rural community and regional centres; varying illness, injury and health status patterns with their specific clinical challenges; a wide range of health service delivery models which emphasize supporting local health care and interdisciplinary teamwork; and the personal and professional challenges, rewards and satisfactions of medical practice in northern and rural environments.

# Different Stages of Development

## James Cook University

- Original proposal July 1997
- Planning Dean appointed March 1998
- Accreditation approval to proceed Late 1998
- Foundation Dean (Prof. Richard Hays) appointed 1999
- School accredited late 1999
- First students (64) admitted February 2000

## Northern Ontario Medical School

- Original proposal June 2000
- Government announcement April 2001
- Implementation Management Committee established September 2001
- Consulting Dean appointed January 2002
- Business Plan completed June 2002
- Founding Dean (Prof. Roger Strasser) full time as of August 2002
- Target for admission of first class September 2005

# Common Elements

- Mission to address chronic problems of under-servicing in their respective rural and remote contexts and specifically to train physicians for rural/remote practice
- Established in recognition that traditional metropolitan schools have not been effective in preparing students for rural practice
- Mandate to focus on population health characteristics of rural/remote populations
- Serve Aboriginal populations with distinct health status characteristics and health service challenges
- Strong reliance on learner-centred, case-based learning approach and on electronic delivery of key curriculum content
- Substantial use of rural/remote clinical settings as clinical education sites for students
- Enriching rural practice by involving rural physicians in medical education
- Governance structure making provision for significant community input

# Challenges and Opportunities

- Accreditation
- Maintaining external reputation and credibility
- Developing, engaging and sustaining clinical faculty network
- Serving as the vehicle for the enrichment of rural/remote health services
- Detailed tracking of successes (and failures)
- Maintaining adequate government funding
- Serving as a model for other jurisdictions