

Interprofessional Rural Program of BC (IRPbc)

Objective

The Interprofessional Rural Program of BC (IRPbc) provides an innovative approach exposing emerging health practitioners to rural life and practice. The program is designed to:

- Model and evaluate interprofessional learning;
- Expand capacity for educating health professionals in BC;
- Support the recruitment and retention of health professionals;
- And, ultimately enhance healthcare services in rural communities.

Project Approach

1. Students are placed into rural communities in teams representing a range of health professions including medicine, nursing, pharmacy and others. In addition to discipline-specific learning, students participate in interprofessional activities such as shadowing, case presentations and a community-based project.
2. Rural health practitioners and communities support student learning and engage them in experiencing rural life and practice.
3. Participating students and rural communities receive supports such as student and preceptor orientation and travel remuneration.
4. The program is overseen by a provincial implementation team representing communities, post-secondary institutions and the Ministries of Health Services and Advanced Education.

Results

From its inception in 2003, the IRPbc has been a leader in interprofessional education in British Columbia. It is fostering a cadre of champions for interprofessional collaboration; profiles rural

“It was an encouraging feeling to have the support, camaraderie and cooperation of the other students and preceptors in the community, and it gave us the opportunity to experience both learning and teaching roles with each other. It helped make me aware of some of the misconceptions existing between professions and the limitations of our own profession.”

– Medical student

health opportunities to emerging health professionals and brings new energy to rural communities. To date, over 150 students have participated in the program, representing 13 professions and 9 post-secondary education institutions. Eight communities across the health authorities have participated.

The partnership through the IRPbc provided a foundation for the broader

Interprofessional Network of BC, which builds on the concepts and extends interprofessional learning into a range of settings across BC.

Conclusion

The IRPbc provides a number of benefits for students, rural communities and the broader health system in promoting interprofessional education and rural health care. The concepts are being further explored through the Rural Academic Health Project (www.health-disciplines.ubc.ca/rahp/)

Resources

www.bcahc.ca/irpbc

Kathy Copeman-Stewart, 604-540-0938

kcopeman@telus.net



IRPbc is one of several projects comprising the Interprofessional Network of BC (In-BC).