

The Rural Physician Associate Program University of Minnesota Medical School

Mission Statement:

The Rural Physician Associate Program is designed to nurture third year student interest in rural medicine and primary care by providing a strong rural educational curriculum.

Program Description:

RPAP provides third year medical students with a longitudinal continuity educational curriculum in rural settings where they complete core clinical clerkships and are guided and mentored collaboratively by both academic and community faculty. The program is designed to enhance development of professional identity by providing students with authentic roles in care giving. It provides students with a broadened perspective on patients' experience of illness and on comprehensive care in the context of family and the community. Typically approximately 40 students per year participate in the program.

Background:

Established in 1971, over 1200 medical students have participated in this program, and graduated in significant numbers to fill rural primary care workforce needs in Minnesota. Approximately one third of our primary physician community teachers in this program are former RPAP students.

Costs and Funding:

The current 2010-2011 fiscal year budget is approximately \$1.02 million. This includes a \$6000 per student stipend to offset housing and travel expenses incurred when moving away from their main campus residences. Each rural community health system provides a \$4000 per student additional stipend. The remaining expenses include medical school faculty and staff salaries, and faculty travel expense to visit and supervise student learning in rural settings.

Outcomes:

Current 2010 data from RPAP office on alums:

- 1003 RPAP alums in active medical practice. Of these:
 - 76% practice primary care
 - 66.5% practice family medicine
 - 56% practice in rural setting
 - 47% currently practice primary care in a rural setting.
- 2008-2009 Residency Match
 - 67.39% Primary Care, 45.65% Family Medicine

Innovations:

For the 2010-2011 class, we are piloting a **Metropolitan Physician Associate Program (MetroPAP)** placing 2 students in inner city Minneapolis sites to nurture interest in future primary care practice in urban underserved areas.