

For Immediate Release

What Practitioners Want: Focus Group Findings Re: A Rural Coordinating Centre for Northern Ontario

22 April 2025 – The Rural Coordinating Centre for British Columbia (RCCbc) has made a huge difference in the attraction, retention, and support of physicians in rural and northern BC. Northern Policy Institute, in partnership with the Northern Ontario School of Medicine University today released the findings of a series of focus groups asking Northern Ontario practitioners if they thought this model should be brought east.

Northern Policy Institute's latest publication, What Practitioners Want; Focus Group Findings Re: A Rural Coordinating Centre for Northern Ontario, confirms that clinicians believe that a coordinating body, like RCCbc, for Northern Ontario would help to enhance retention of rural clinicians. The participants highlighted the benefits of such an organization in the form of improved care delivery, enhanced recruitment, better academic alignment, more robust data, more timely information, and advocacy that would support rural physicians to better serve the rural, remote and indigenous communities of Northern Ontario.

Dr. Sarah Newbery, a co-author of the report, highlighted that this latest report is part of a larger project exploring the potential of a Rural Coordinating Centre for Northern Ontario. "These focus groups were the third step in our effort to explore the need for greater support of physicians in rural and northern Ontario." Said Dr. Newbery, "The next step is to develop an implementation plan. Clinicians, administrators, community members, educators and policy makers must come together on an urgent basis to move this forward. At this particular time, what physicians need is tangible supports to do their work across the breadth of practice – primary care, ER, hospital care – and a coordinating body can help support physicians in practice in ways that are not currently being done."

Want to learn more about the RCCbc and how practitioners in Northern Ontario believe it can improve the health care available to you and your neighbours? Read the report at:

https://www.northernpolicy.ca/what-practitioners-want

Media Interviews: co-author *Sarah Newberry*, MD is available for comment. To arrange an interview, please contact:

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About Northern Policy Institute:

Northern Policy Institute is Northern Ontario's independent, evidence-driven think tank. We perform research, analyze data, and disseminate ideas. Our mission is to enhance Northern Ontario's capacity to take the lead position on socio-economic policy that impacts our communities, our province, our country, and our world.

We believe in partnership, reconciliation, collaboration, communication, and cooperation. Our team seeks to do inclusive research that involves broad engagement and delivers recommendations for specific, measurable action. Our success depends on our partnerships with other entities present in or passionate about Northern Ontario.

Based in Thunder Bay and Kirkland Lake, NPI is active in every region of Northern Ontario. During the summer months, we have satellite offices in communities across Northern Ontario staffed by teams of Experience North placements. These placements are university and college students working in your community on issues important to you and your neighbours.