



NS enjoys success recruiting rural docs

A decision by the Medical Society of Nova Scotia and the provincial government to cohire a physician recruiter appears to be paying off. Since 1995, when former drug-company sales representative and continuing-medical-education coordinator Frank Peters hung up his shingle at the society, 20 medical positions have been filled in the province, including 9 under a special incentive package designed to attract physicians to rural areas (Robb N. Nova Scotia hopes to solve recruitment problem with joint effort from MDs, government. *Can Med Assoc J* 1996;155:1615-6).

Unfortunately, one province's success can be another's bad news. Several of the physicians recruited by

communities in Nova Scotia are moving from small communities in other parts of Canada.

Brochure on air-bag safety available

Public concern about automobile air bags has been growing in the wake of reports of injury and death caused by air-bag deployment (Buckle up and put the children in the back. *Can Med Assoc J* 1997;156:857). In response, Transport Canada has published an illustrated brochure on how air bags work, proper seat adjustment, seat-belt use and the placement of children. The brochure can be reproduced in whole or in part for patients; it is available by calling 800 333-0371, or 613 998-8616 in the Ottawa region.

Alberta MDs concerned about primary care role

About 83% of Alberta physicians are concerned they will lose their role as primary care providers/coordinators to other health care practitioners, a fall 1996 physician-opinion survey conducted by the Alberta Medical Association (AMA) has revealed. More than 700 responses were received to the questionnaire, which covered issues relating to health care reform and the work of the association.

The AMA's *Alberta Doctor's Digest* reports that there is a strong sense of cohesion and urgency among members on issues such as patient advocacy, quality of care, government lobbying and professional unity. In addition, 66% of respondents agreed there is an appropriate role for pri-

"Take your butt outside"

A new antismoking campaign from Physicians for a Smoke-free Canada (PSC), in partnership with the Glaxo Wellcome Foundation, puts a new focus on the issue of secondhand smoke. Instead of condemning the smoking habit, the 2-year advertising campaign will attempt to educate smokers about the dangers of secondhand smoke, particularly its effect on children. The slogan? "If you can't quit, take your butt outside."

"This campaign recognizes that people will continue to smoke," says Cynthia Callard, PSC's executive director. "It's a difficult issue for government to approach, but it is certainly appropriate for physicians to speak out."

The campaign includes public-service announcements in print and on television, as well as transit advertisements in the Toronto area. Messages explain that in homes where parents smoke children are 46% more likely to contract bron-

chitis or pneumonia, 19% more likely to experience ear infections and 43% more likely to become asthmatic. Examples of the print



messages include: "Safe smoking for the whole family. Step one: step outside" and "How to make smoking more enjoyable for you and

your loved ones. Do it outside."

A recent Statistics Canada survey found that only 20% of Canadians knew that secondhand smoke causes asthma and fewer than 1% knew it caused ear infections. "The message just wasn't reaching people," says Callard.

The Ontario Campaign for Action on Tobacco is also trying to send a message about secondhand smoke. The Toronto-based group recently called attention to a California Environmental Protection Agency study, which concluded that exposure to secondhand smoke may lead to thousands of deaths in the US from sudden infant death syndrome and cardiovascular disease, and thousands of new cases of asthma; it also suggests that there may be a link between exposure to secondhand smoke and increased risk of breast and cervical cancer. The report is available at <http://www.calepa.cahwnet.gov/oehha>.