

Rural Medicine Interest Group

Northern Interior BC

Community Visiting Program



Community Visit Information Booklet for Medical Students & Residents

Physician Shadowing Opportunity

Rural Community Visits offer a firsthand opportunity to explore rural communities and determine whether they align with your vision for your practice. This immersive experience includes clinical shadowing with local family physicians, engaging in outdoor and community activities, and sharing a dinner with rural doctors. Designed around your interests, this unique opportunity provides valuable insight into the life and practice of a rural physician.





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Community Visiting Program for Medical Students & Residents

If you have an interest in rural medicine, this is your chance to explore the rural communities that we serve. Each visit includes a clinical experience, a chance to enjoy the community and connect with local physicians over a meal. Each experience is tailored to your interests & provides insight into the life of a rural physician.

To take advantage of this amazing opportunity, email a note about why you are interested in Rural medicine and why are you interested in a particular town. More than one community can be visited in a trip if they are fairly close to each other.

Send it to srocheleau@nirdbc.ca.

- Visits are dependent upon funding
- Max group size 2 - 4 students/residents, but solo visits are welcome, too.
- Fuel receipts, accomodations (2-3 nights)
- Dates subject to physician availability

Communities

Mackenzie, Valemount, Takla,
McBride, Fort St. James, Fraser Lake,
Vanderhoof, Burns Lake, Quesnel

Contact Stephanie
for more information
srocheleau@nirdbc.ca



Frequently asked questions

What communities can I visit in the Northern Interior Region?

Choose from the following list of communities. Note that when the communities are closely located, you can visit more than one on the trip.

Burns Lake	Quesnel
Fort St James	Takla
Fraser Lake	Valemount
Mackenzie	Vanderhoof
McBride	

How long is this shadowing opportunity?

The duration of the shadowing opportunity is flexible depending on funding, though a two to three-day experience is ideal to balance clinical exposure with community engagement. Scheduling depends on physician availability in your chosen community. While there's no required time of year, it's important to consider that northern winters span October to April, and winter driving conditions may affect travel plans.

For an optimal experience, select dates that align with your schedule and allow for weekday clinical shadowing, as smaller communities have limited opportunities to observe clinical work on weekends.

***All shadowing experiences depend on physician availability. While we aim for a two to three-day community experience, this does not include three full days of clinical shadowing. Participants may spend 2–4 hours shadowing, with the remainder of their time engaged in community activities or exploration—either through scheduled programming or on their own. ***

Who can attend this shadowing opportunity?

You can book a solo shadowing experience or enhance the opportunity by sharing it with another medical student. To ensure an optimal experience within current community capacities, we recommend a maximum group size of two students.

What does a clinical shadowing opportunity look like?

This personalized experience is designed to align with your interests while offering valuable insight into the role of a rural family physician. Family physicians are essential in providing primary care to their communities and often serve in local emergency departments, where emergency medicine skills are crucial, especially in smaller communities. In some locations, family physicians have expanded their practice to include specialized services such as oncology, surgical procedures, and labor and delivery. During the experience, you may spend up to four hours in clinical settings, shadowing a rural family physician.

What is involved in an outdoor and community experience?

We strive to provide a unique and immersive experience that highlights the community you're visiting. This opportunity offers valuable insight into local life, with the hope of inspiring you to return and practice there.

Seasonal activities vary, ensuring each visit reflects the distinct character of the community. We collaborate with community ambassadors and local residents to create an authentic experience. Depending on the time of year, available activities may include cross-country skiing, kayaking, hiking, museum visits, and trips to conservation centres, among others.

Dinner with a Rural Physician

When possible, this special gathering is arranged with one or two available local physicians, offering a relaxed setting to connect and socialize beyond the clinical environment. It provides local doctors a chance to share their experiences and gives you the opportunity to ask questions about rural practice and community life.

Compensation

To ensure we can accommodate as many students as possible, we offer reimbursement for the following:

- *Accommodations:* We may pay for up to 3 nights if required, but please choose the most cost-effective option when booking, sharing a room if possible. Submit your receipts for reimbursement.
- *Fuel/Travel Expenses:* Keep fuel receipts for reimbursement. Airfare may be covered in some cases, depending upon locations visited—please discuss options with the coordinator. NIRD can cover the fuel for your community visit trip only, not an entire holiday.

Steps for Participating in a Clinical Shadowing Community Visit Experience

- 1.) Choose a community of interest. You can include more than one community in case your first choice cannot accommodate a visitor during any of the date ranges you supplied.
- 2.) Send your email about why you are interested in rural medicine and why you are interested in a particular town.
- 3.) Indicate if there is a specific clinical experience you are hoping to observe (example- Clinic shadowing, or ER shadowing, etc.)
- 4.) Decide if this is going to be an individual or group (you plus one other student) visit.
- 5.) Provide 3 potential dates for a community visit.
- 6.) Provide us with potential outdoor/community interests, so we can arrange a community experience tailored to your interests.
- 7.) We will work with our community partners, physicians, and clinic staff to arrange your visit and provide you with a unique experience that has you wanting to explore a career in rural family medicine and an outstanding lifestyle.
- 8.) You book your accommodations & arrange travel plans.
- 9.) We welcome you to the community of choice for your shadowing experience.
- 10) You submit receipts for reimbursement once your visit is completed. Don't forget to include your mailing address for the cheque to be sent to.
- 11) You send your reflections on your visit i.e. was it what you'd hoped for; did your visit help you decide if you'd like to know more about rural practice; is there something you'd like to see in a future visit to a rural community, etc. Please include a few pictures that we can share with our Board of Directors in our reports.