



For immediate release — Friday, May 17, 2024

Rural Medical Education Program Training Centres one step closer with Memorandum of Understanding

The next step in expanding health-care capacity in southern Alberta was formalized today with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the University of Lethbridge and University of Calgary.

Early last month, the Government of Alberta announced operational and capital funding to establish Rural Medical Education Program Training Centres to enhance physician training across the province. One of two centres will be located on the University of Lethbridge campus. Through this innovative partnership, aspiring medical professionals will have the opportunity to complete the entirety of their University of Calgary medical degree at the University of Lethbridge.

“One of the great challenges for families in small- to mid-sized communities in southern Alberta is accessing a family physician. This includes rural and Indigenous communities that struggle with health care capacity,” says Dr. Michelle Helstein, University of Lethbridge Provost and Vice-President (Academic). “Through this partnership we will see local students recruited and trained across southern Alberta, greatly increasing the probability they will continue to practice in these underserved communities for years to come.”

The formalizing of the partnership through the MOU is an important next step in the process of developing the framework that will deliver this crucial programming. The institutions will now work on an agreement to jointly deliver the medical training program.

“Expanding physician training capacity in Alberta post-secondaries can lead to a significantly healthier population. We are excited to work collaboratively with our colleagues at the University of Lethbridge with the support of the Government of Alberta as we create the future of health together to better serve the diverse health needs of the people of southern Alberta,” says Dr. Penny Werthner, University of Calgary Interim Provost and Vice-President (Academic).

The Rural Medical Education Program Training Centres will use a distributed medical education model, whereby the University of Alberta (in cooperation with Northwestern Polytechnic) and the University of Calgary (in cooperation with the University of Lethbridge) partner with local institutions to develop the regional training campuses. The University of Lethbridge training will occupy a major portion of the University's Centre for Community Wellbeing facility.

-- 30 --

Contact:

Trevor Kenney, Manager of Public Affairs
403-329-2710
403-360-7639 (cell)
trevor.kenney@uleth.ca
@ULethbridge

Our University's Blackfoot name is Iniskim, meaning Sacred Buffalo Stone. The University is located in traditional Blackfoot Confederacy territory. We honour the Blackfoot people and their traditional ways of knowing in caring for this land, as well as all Indigenous Peoples who have helped shape and continue to strengthen our University community.