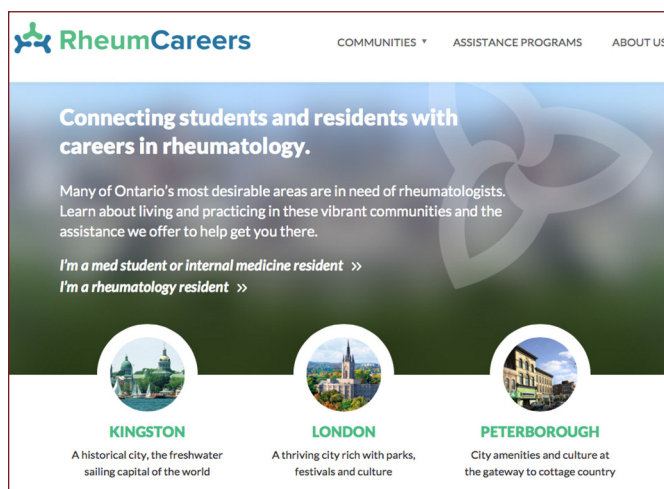


RheumCareers.com: An ORA Manpower Project

By Jane Purvis, MD, FRCPC

Ontario rheumatology, like many other jurisdictions in Canada, is currently underserved. Predictions suggest that there will be insufficient rheumatologists to see all the patients with inflammatory arthritis (IA) in the coming years. In several communities, rheumatologists have ceased practice without a replacement to fill the void; other communities have seen significant growth in demand for rheumatologists without a change in the number of available physicians. The Ontario Rheumatology Association (www.ontariorheum.ca) is committed to finding solutions to this problem as part of a model of care that would make arthritis care available in a timely fashion for all Ontarians. The ORA Manpower Committee, made up of rheumatologists, Arthritis Society (TAS) members, and patients, is working towards solutions both for now and for the longer term. An initial priority of the committee was the creation of a new website, called RheumCareers (www.rheumcareers.ca), in support of this mandate.

The purpose of the website is twofold. The first is to create increased awareness of rheumatology as a career choice for those in medical school and early years of residency. Promotional materials, including information postcards available at medical student functions, as well as other tangible reminders, facilitate the awareness mandate. The website allows medical students and early-year residents to contact program directors across the province and access further information on electives and summer student programs in which they might participate.



The website's second purpose is to allow current rheumatology residents in Ontario to view communities across the province that are looking for rheumatologists. They can obtain information about the community itself, as well as arrange opportunities to visit the region, meet the local rheumatologists, and tour with a physician recruiter. The ORA will be helping to support

these residents by providing physician mentors, as well as links to practice information from the Ontario Medical Association (OMA) and the Canadian Medical Association (CMA). It is anticipated that this process will facilitate new rheumatologists setting up their practices, hopefully in communities of greatest need.

Information about our project has been made available to medical schools in Ontario, the internal medicine program directors across Ontario, the Professional Association of Residents of Ontario (PARO), HealthForceOntario, OMA, CMA, the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada, the Ontario Medical Students Association, TAS, and the CRA.

The Manpower Committee is confident that these and other measures will be effective in attracting new trainees into rheumatology and, ultimately, allow for equitable, timely, and effective arthritis care throughout Ontario.

Jane Purvis, MD, FRCPC
Past-President, Ontario Rheumatology Association
Rheumatologist, The Medical Centre
Peterborough, Ontario