

PULSE

What rural bliss?

The professional satisfaction of rural physicians has decreased over the last decade, results from 2 CMA surveys (1991 and 1999) and a joint survey conducted in 2001 indicate. Similarly, rural physicians' satisfaction with their personal circumstances has also decreased.

Half (51%) of rural physicians indicated they were very satisfied with the recreational opportunities available in 1991, but this had fallen to 34% by 2001. When asked about career opportunities for their spouses, 23% and 21% of rural physicians (1991 and 1999, respectively) indicated that they were very satisfied, but by 2001 this had dropped to 13%. By 2001, only 12% of rural physicians were very satisfied with educational opportunities for their children.

The *2001 Survey on Rural Health Practice in Canada*, a collaborative project by the CMA, the Canadian Nurses Association, the Society of Rural Physicians of Canada and the Canadian Pharmacists Association, revealed no gender split in opinions except with respect to career advancement potential. Forty percent of female rural physicians indicated they were very or somewhat dissatisfied with advancement opportunities, but only 26% of their male counterparts shared this view.

Smaller rural communities (< 5000 population) and larger ones (> 5000) did not differ much with respect to professional satisfaction, but there were differences of opinion regarding personal/family matters. Half (50%) of rural physicians in larger rural communities reported being somewhat or very satisfied with cultural opportunities, compared with 40% in smaller communities. Physicians in smaller rural communities also reported greater dissatisfaction with educational opportunities for children (34% were somewhat or very dissatisfied, compared with 24%) and with career opportunities for their children (56% vs. 43%). — *Tara S. Chauhan*, Project Manager, Research, Policy and Planning, CMA

