

MEDIA RELEASE

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SIAS nursing students roll their sleeves up in Indian Head *Valuable experience gained with opportunity for future recruitment*

Indian Head, March 25, 2009 – To fill the growing need for quality practice education experiences, the SIAS Nursing Division, in consultation with several regional health authorities, is involving rural and remote communities in the education of nursing students.

Indian Head is the first location to participate in the program in 2009. Nursing students are gaining health care experience at the Golden Prairie Home, Indian Head Hospital and Indian Head Elementary School which will end on April 6, 2009. The program partners include the Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region with funding from the Ministry of Advanced Education Employment and Labour.

“We have been redesigning our approach to clinical practice education to expand capacity and provide innovative practice education opportunities in rural and remote communities and non-traditional settings,” says Netha Dyck, SIAS’s dean of Nursing. “We are grateful for the active participation and support of the communities and their invaluable contribution to the success of the projects.”

“First-year nursing students are gaining knowledge and understanding of the continuum of care, the generalist role of the nurse and the nurse’s role as a member of a rural community,” says Kim Neudorf, SIAS’s project manager. “And, communities are hoping that education in their community can serve as a useful recruitment tool and are anxious to participate in the education of students.”

Myrna Weisbrod, Manager of the Indian Head Hospital and Claudette Bugiera, Manager Golden Prairie Home agree that having the students do their practicum in Indian Head is helpful for recruitment of staff.

“It’s great exposure for the students,” said Bugiera. “In fact, one student said she had never considered working in long-term care until she spent a day with us.”

Weisbrod says some students are also now considering practising in a rural area. "In a smaller facility, staff are generalists and the students like being able to use all their skills," said Weisbrod. "The experience also gives senior nurses an opportunity to pass on their knowledge and skills to nursing students."

"Rural nursing has been everything and more than we could have anticipated. The community has welcomed us with open arms and their interdisciplinary approach to primary health care has served as an excellent learning environment for first-year nursing students," says Heather Cuthbertson, Nursing Education Program of Saskatchewan (NEPS) student. "As future health care professionals, we believe rural nursing is an extremely valuable component to Saskatchewan Health Care and we are honoured to be active participants."

The SIAST Nursing Division delivers 15 innovative nursing programs to more than 3,000 students across the province of Saskatchewan. It offers the Nursing Education Program of Saskatchewan (NEPS) in partnership with First Nations University of Canada and the University of Saskatchewan.

SIAST is Saskatchewan's primary public institution for post-secondary technical education and skills training, recognized nationally and internationally for its expertise and innovation. More than 13,000 students are registered in SIAST programs, which touch every sector of the economy; additionally, the organization draws almost 32,000 individual course registrations. It operates campuses in Moose Jaw, Prince Albert, Regina and Saskatoon, and provides a number of courses and programs through distance education.

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