

Doctors Get Orientation Program
IMG's Attend Medical Conference
BCITP Roundtable Discusses Web Development
Capacity Canada Establishing Roundtables
News of BCITP Associations
SFU Study Criticizes BC's ESL Training

Doctors Get Orientation Program

Internationally trained medical doctors saw the BC government take a tentative but significant step on their behalf in January, when a new training program started at St. Paul's Hospital. Twelve internationally trained medical graduates (IMGs) are attending the full-time, three-month program, which is described as an "orientation to Canadian medicine".

The program is supervised by Dr. Rod Andrew, who also presides over BC's six current IMG family physician residencies. It is funded by the BC Ministry of Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services.

Although this critically important transition training is being offered as a one-time pilot (trial) program, it is hoped that the BC Ministry of Health Planning will provide funds to continue allow another intake of IMGs in September.

IMGs Attend Medical Conference

Dr. Clement Williams, of West Vancouver, was instrumental in allowing members of AIMD BC to attend the 'Aging Male' conference in Vancouver in early February. Their participation was covered in the Vancouver Sun as well as on Global TV. The story blossomed into additional coverage of issues affecting IMGs on Global TV less than a week later.

Meanwhile, AIMD BC is working to obtain more family practice residencies for IMGs, and to have more IMGs licensed as "Clinical Trainees". It is also actively working to establish an effective relationship with the College of Family Physicians.

AIMD BC continues to train members to deal with the media and to network effectively. In addition it is

encouraging our communities to voice their concern over the lack of integration of internationally trained medical doctors.

Roundtable Discusses Web Development

At its February meeting the BC Roundtable on Access to Professions agreed to give priority to the development of a central source of information to support immigrants seeking accreditation and employment.

A guest at this meeting was Collin Mercer, Acting Manager of the International Qualifications Program (IQP), Ministry of Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services. He told the Roundtable that the province recognizes a need for a fully integrated internet portal that immigrants can visit before and after coming to Canada, for information about English language training, professional training, registration and employment.

He said that this service is now being developed both federally and provincially. The federal website, *Going to Canada* (http://canadainternational.gc.ca/GTC/Going_To_Canada-EN.htm) is being expanded to provide information for immigrant professionals, and will include links to provincial sites.

In BC, *Looking Ahead* (www.lookingahead.bc.ca) is being redesigned as a resource for employers, immigrants and service providers. *Looking Ahead's* Employer Resource Guide was launched in January, to help and encourage employers to hire immigrants. Similar guides for immigrants and service providers will follow later this year.

Mr Mercer also described other government work to address barriers to employment, licensing and information. His PowerPoint presentation can be found in the "Project Reports" at www.bcitp.net.

Representatives from all interested ITP associations are welcome to attend future meetings of this

Roundtable. For information contact Sandy Berman at 604-873-8545.

Capacity Canada Establishing Roundtables

Capacity Canada has nearly completed its survey of Canada's internationally trained professional groups. It is now beginning to create provincial roundtables of immigrant professionals.

Intensive work has started on this project with key stakeholders in the provinces of Alberta and Nova Scotia. In the long term Capacity Canada aims to establish a national roundtable of internationally trained professional groups from across the country, and to assist these groups in achieving their self-identified goals.

The choice of the two provinces came after much discussion and consideration of factors such as budget, interest, existing work completed and the numbers of 'active' internationally trained professionals. Other provinces will be approached later in the year.

Capacity Canada is a two-year project funded by the Department of Canadian Heritage. It is coordinated in Eastern Canada by PROMPT (Policy Roundtable Mobilizing Professions and Trades) in Ontario, and in Western Canada by BCITP Net.

News of BCITP Associations

Victoria – new co-ordinator Alvaro Moreno is a community development professional with great enthusiasm and ideas for the Victoria chapter.

Central Vancouver Island – BCITPNet Nanaimo also has a new coordinator, Maggie Wouterloot. Maggie has worked for 11 years as an ESL instructor for the Central Vancouver Island Multicultural Society.

The Central Vancouver Island branch continues its regular monthly meetings with invited speakers. In April, BCITPNet Nanaimo and the Employment Services Centre of the Central Vancouver Island Multicultural Society will participate in the largest mid-Island business networking event of the season. "Connecting Island Businesses" is expected to draw over 600 business people.

Okanagan – BCITP Net Okanagan has connected with MLAs Rick Thorpe and Tom Christensen, who have been helpful in obtaining government information and responses for this group. At its strategic planning meeting in February it struck a Regulatory Bodies Committee to create a list of general recommendations to optimize the accreditation process. It also created a Bridging Programs Committee to make detailed recommendations on criteria for bridging programs available to ITPs in the Okanagan.

SFU Study Criticizes BC's ESL Training

A new study by Simon Fraser University reports that this province's immigrant language services get the lowest mark in the country.

The Interprovincial Report Card on Immigrant Settlement and Labour Market Integration Services, released on February 22, says that BC has the third-highest number of immigrant landings in Canada, but spends less per capita on language instruction than any other province except Quebec. In most cases BC's funding scheme does not provide for classes beyond ELSA 3, or rudimentary English skills.

A Vancouver Sun article on the report ("BC gets failing grade in services for immigrants", Feb 22/05) reports that while BC's settlement and immigrant services are on a par with Alberta and Manitoba, its ESL services are much less effective in getting immigrants into paid work. As one cause it cites BC's policy of spending half its ESL transfer payments on university level ESL programs, rather than putting them all into training for work-ready language skills as the other provinces do.

*Do you have news for BCITP Net?
Contact Patrick Coady: bcitpnet@sdiss.org*