

John Verby

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
NEWS SERVICE, S-68 MORRILL HALL
MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA 55455
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NEWS PEOPLE: For further information
contact BOB LEE, 373-7510

40 'U' MEDICAL STUDENTS TO BE
RURAL PHYSICIAN ASSOCIATES

(FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE)

Forty University of Minnesota medical students will be arriving in 37 state communities Sept. 15 to begin service as rural physician associates.

Now starting its fifth year, the University's Rural Physician Associate Program (RPAP) has sent more than 120 third-year medical students to learn by doing at the side of experienced family practitioners.

This year, eight new towns are participating and eight internal medicine specialists have been added to the physician-teachers who spend from nine months to a year with a student.

Students and physicians will be together in the office, clinic and hospital--- wherever patient needs are met. The local physician-preceptors receive clinical faculty appointments from the University but no salary. The students receive two quarters of academic credit plus a \$5,000 stipend from the state legislature and \$2,500 from the preceptor for the first nine months. The final three months of service are optional.

According to RPAP developer and director Dr. John Verby, professor of family practice and community medicine, the program has already proven successful on at least two counts.

First, practically all of the students who participated in the program at the beginning and have completed their residency training are now practicing in small Minnesota communities, several in the towns they lived in as rural physician associates.

Second, their preceptors and the visiting consultants from the University's Health Sciences Center say that they have learned from each other.

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(A1-5, 8; B1, 5; C1, 4)