

# Rural Health Providers Applauded

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*An affirmation ...*

How good it is to hear a health care specialist commend rural health care practices and note how those working in urban hospitals could pick up pointers.

Our local paper reported that nursing scholar Jeri Bighee, from Boise State University, was much impressed with what she saw while visiting the local rural hospitals.

In her province-wide telecast to Alberta Health Services she noted that the hospitals she visited used an asset based approach that was used rather than focusing on health care deficits.

Instead of what's missing, the professionals she saw looked at the strengths they could call on. Thus they were able to build on the positive and the special things that were available.

A feature asset was the strong sense of community cohesiveness, and the way the staffs from each community offered services the neighbouring communities didn't provide.

"Cooperation in the rural community is absolutely essential, and it is really built into the culture... Folks have learned that cooperation and collaboration is how we all survive, especially when resources are limited."

Rather than placing their emphasis on disease and sickness in health care, these professional providers use their resources well to promote ways the residents can care for their health.

Of course there are downsides too. Geographic and professional isolation creates difficulties in retaining individuals. And, though they are deeply respected, most have the feeling they are "always on duty". This leads to burnout.

But what Jeri Bigbee saw firsthand was the professional dedication of the providers and their high level of commitment to the communities where they serve.

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