

## **Small Community Faces Doctor Shortage**

*Solutions are being sought when the community loses the services of both doctors ...*

Once they had a hospital – until the regional health authorities changed it to a first-aid site without consulting the residents. Those same authorities now want to remove all the small equipment (like blood pressure apparatus) while the community is struggling to make working conditions more favourable for resident doctors.

This community, my home town, serves an extended prairie region. Patients might otherwise have to travel up to 200 km to get to the nearest hospital.

With regret the two resident doctors resigned because of offers that would further each persons' professional careers.

If the community wants to find replacements, when the scarcity of such persons for rural communities is notorious, they realized they had to become pro-active. If the people of the region being served could purchase the clinic that would mean new doctors could come into the area without having to make this considerable out-lay of cash.

Under the leadership of the Mayor, and with the support of the Mayors from two adjacent towns, people gathered to see how they could help. A retired local doctor offered to come back on stream for six months. Locums, who did fill-in services, phoned to offer their services. An Emergency Medical Services (EMS) team will stay resident in the community for the present time. And those with political and administrative skills will develop an out-reach plan inviting new doctors to take up residence in the new community-owned clinic.

When a community works together under the guidance of committed leaders, great things can happen.

*(Notes by Joyce Sasse, January / 10)*