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## **Lethbridge doctor named Regional Lead of new Southern Alberta Medical Program**

The Southern Alberta Medical Program ([SAMP](#)) has reached another significant milestone as it prepares for its first cohort of undergraduate medical students, naming Dr. Richard M. Buck, MD, as the program's Regional Lead.

Buck practices in Lethbridge within the Emergency Department of Chinook Regional Hospital and is also an Assistant Clinical Professor in the Department of Family Medicine at the University of Calgary and University of Alberta. As Regional Lead, he is responsible for providing strategic and operational leadership to develop and implement SAMP, supporting medical education training in Lethbridge, Medicine Hat and Indigenous and rural communities throughout southern Alberta.



“Dr. Buck is uniquely qualified for this very important role given his strong teaching background and familiarity with the specific challenges of finding physicians to work in rural communities,” says Dr. Rebecca Schiff, PhD, ULEthbridge’s deputy provost. “His role will be key in developing partnerships for medical education in southern Alberta and helping to promote interprofessional learning, teaching and research to support rural generalist practice and team-based care.”

Buck has extensive training and experience in medical education, first earning a Bachelor of Education (mathematics and French) and Bachelor of Science from the University of Winnipeg before completing his medical degree at the UManitoba in 2001.

“It’s exciting and I’m really looking forward to it,” says Buck. “It’s also a little bit intimidating because this is such a big project and it’s going to be challenging, but the chance to grow our own talent here is massive. I worked an ER shift recently and to see

so many people who have difficulty getting access to a family doctor — it'll be wonderful to be part of this project.”

Buck has long been a proponent of preparing the next generation of physicians. He's participated in doctor training from the time he completed his own residency, working as a site director and in an administrative capacity. He takes pride in helping young physicians find their way.

“When you see them have their ‘aha’ moments, that feels the best. You see them make a connection with a patient or they use that clinical tidbit that they'd only read about in medical school and now they've used it to make a diagnosis — it's exciting to see,” he says.

Dr. Todd Anderson, MD, dean of UCalgary's Cumming School of Medicine, is delighted to welcome the respected physician and teacher to this new leadership role.

“I'm very confident that Dr. Buck will strengthen this valuable partnership between our universities as we work together to train new physicians and enhance health care access across southern Alberta.

“Dr. Buck has been deeply committed to our medical school for well over a decade. He is a dedicated teacher to students and residents who also has played a vital role in preceptor development. We're very fortunate to have someone of his caliber in this position.”

The SAMP program will see an increase in the training of rural physicians immediately with undergraduate medical students beginning at ULeithbridge in 18 months, as it aims to improve the availability of physicians in rural areas.

Buck says it's important to look at what SAMP means to health care in Alberta long term. It's why the medical community has been talking about its potential for so long.

“I think what it means long term is a stable supply of physicians,” says Buck. “We're not just trying to fill gaps, we're also looking at it like so many other careers — doctors change professions, they retire — so you need people to fill those roles. Also, I hope what it says to people is that if you're planning on moving to southern Alberta, we have a strong and stable health-care system you can rely on. That may be a little pollyannaish, but having a medical school here is a big, big part of that and can be very impactful.”

To view online: <https://www.ulethbridge.ca/unews/article/lethbridge-doctor-named-regional-lead-new-southern-alberta-medical-program>

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