

LOCAL NEWS



HEALTHCARE TRAVELLING ROADSHOW

WILLIAM STODALKA PHOTO

Lisa Flegel (left) and Tanner Dobson (right) demonstrate dentistry and other types of medicine to North Peace Secondary School students on Tuesday.



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Quinn Gentles (right) shows medical equipment to North Peace Secondary School students on Tuesday. Gentles graduated from North Peace Secondary School in 2008.



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North Peace Secondary School student Amber Mills examines a microscope as part of the Healthcare Travelling Roadshow.



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Tyson Bell (left) and Christina Conrad (right) discussed physiotherapy with NPSS students.



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Students learn about x-rays at the Healthcare Travelling Roadshow.

MEDICINE from A1

Giesbrecht presented at a session at NPSS telling kids about her job. One of the students at that session was Ben Maxfield.

"It's good to see what the job entails, how do I get those prerequisites to see those fields," said Maxfield.

Maxfield was particularly interested in physiotherapy. He said he had some problems with his lower back, and physiotherapy helped him out.

According to him, students in the Northeast may have less incentive to go and study medicine, given that other jobs in the oil patch may offer a good amount of money.

For Giesbrecht, getting students from the southern part of the province to take a tour of the region to "show it's a really great area," would help encourage doctors to move up here.

"[It would show] everyone's really friendly, and we're really accepting of each other," she said.

Bringing doctors to the area is a big priority for Fort St. John city council.

Fort St. John is currently experiencing a shortage of family doctors. By September, the number of doctors within the community is expected to grow to 15, but this is still less than half of the 31 doctors that Northern Health said is needed within the community.

For Quinn Gentles, who grew up in Fort St. John and is now studying medicine, there is no easy answer for what could be done to help bring potential new doctors like himself to Fort St. John.

He believed programs like the

travelling roadshow would help this, and he has worked to ensure that the roadshow came to Fort St. John this year.

Gentles admitted that there are "huge" pressures on current physicians, given the shortage, and that this shortage could be a barrier for new doctors considering moving to Fort St. John. But this situation also presents some opportunities for young doctors.

"It can be a chance for a young graduate to practice a really wide variety of [medicine] and find their niche within a community."

But a long-term solution is to target students who grew up in the North and encourage them to pursue medicine.

"I think it's most critical in the long run to target these students locally to recruit them to get into the careers," said Gentles. "One of the most important things when [new doctors] choose to practice in the community is whether they have the roots here, and whether they've been exposed to practice here."

That seems to be the case for Gentles, as he plans to practice in Fort St. John once he is finished schooling.

"There's just something about home," he said. "This community, in the long term, has a lot of promise. It certainly hasn't stopped growing since I left for school. In the future I think it would be a very exciting place to raise a family."

The Healthcare Travelling Roadshow will be in Dawson Creek on Thursday and Tumbler Ridge on Friday this week.

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In addition to the Healthcare Travelling Roadshow, which it will be hosting Thursday morning, Dawson Creek Secondary School's South Peace campus will be holding a separate career fair in the afternoon on June 11. The event is designed to ex-

pose students to career paths within the Peace River region that they can pursue after graduation.

The fair will be open to all DCSS students starting at 12:45 - 3:30 p.m., and to the general public from 4:30 - 7:30 p.m.