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New family physician practising in McLennan and Falher

McLENNAN / FALHER — Local residents have increased access to primary care with the arrival of a new family physician now practising in McLennan and Falher.

Dr. Ukulu Owanga is a family physician who arrived here this summer. He received his medical training in the Democratic Republic of Congo, and obtained his Master of Medicine in Family Medicine in South Africa, where he also completed his medical residency.

His areas of interest are child and adult medicine. He has experience in rural health care and has spent time in teaching hospitals where he's worked in emergency and family medicine.

"The arrival of Dr. Owanga is good news for the residents of McLennan and Falher, who now have another family physician to help them meet their health care needs," says Sarah Hoffman, Minister of Health.

"The Government of Alberta is committed to continuing to work with Alberta Health Services and community partners to recruit additional health professionals to our province."

Dr. Owanga's recruitment is the result of efforts by Alberta Health Services (AHS) to expand health care services in communities across its North Zone.

Dr. Owanga will be a welcome addition to both communities, says Dr. Terry Unger, Area Zone Medical Director for McLennan and Falher in the North Zone of AHS.

"We are always working to improve health care services to ensure our local care needs continue to be met," says Dr. Unger.

AHS has three physician resource planners dedicated to identifying and pursuing physician recruitment opportunities for AHS North Zone. They work closely with various community partners and organizations, such as local Health Advisory Councils, the Rural Physician Action Plan, and independent community physician recruitment and retention committees. In this case, the Smoky River Regional Physician Recruitment and Retention Committee provided significant support.

"Residents of McLennan and Falher are very engaged and we are fortunate to partner with them," says physician resource planner Allison Chisholm.

Dr. Owanga and his wife, Gode, have six sons: Jean Pierre, Benedict, Nathan, Michael and twins David and Daniel. Together they enjoy watching soccer and basketball. They look forward to experiencing their first Canadian winter.

"I like rural medicine because it provides an opportunity to treat a wide variety of medical issues and concerns," says Dr. Owanga. "One of the perks of rural life is that people are friendly and make you feel as though you are a member of the same family."

Alberta Health Services is the provincial health authority responsible for planning and delivering health supports and services for more than four million adults and children living in Alberta. Its mission is to provide a patient-focused, quality health system that is accessible and sustainable for all Albertans.

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For media inquiries, contact:

Kirsten Goruk
AHS Communications
780-830-3537