Caring for patients with cancer

The results of the 2007 National Physician Survey (NPS) provide an interesting insight into second-year family medicine residents' expectations and perceptions of caring for patients with cancer. A total of 77.3% of residents indicated that they intended to treat patients with cancer as a component of their future practices. This percentage varied substantially depending on the anticipated patient population, from a high of 95.2% of residents who expected to serve rural, isolated, or remote communities, to 85.1% of those looking to practise in small towns.

As **Figure 1** illustrates, regardless of the population to be served, a discrepancy emerged when residents were asked to gauge their preparedness to provide care to patients with cancer. For example, although 95.2% of family medicine residents intending to serve rural, isolated, or remote populations anticipated caring for patients with cancer, only 76.2% thought they were adequately trained to manage such cases. These findings highlight the need for flexible training programs that will encourage future family physicians to take on these much-needed health care provider responsibilities.

The NPS is a collaborative project of the College of Family Physicians of Canada, the Canadian Medical Association, and the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada. Additional results are available at **www.nationalphysiciansurvey.ca**. If you would like the opportunity to develop and write a future Fast Fact using the NPS results, please contact **Artem Safarov,** National Physician Survey Research Assistant, at 800 387-6197, extension 242, or **asafarov@cfpc.ca**.
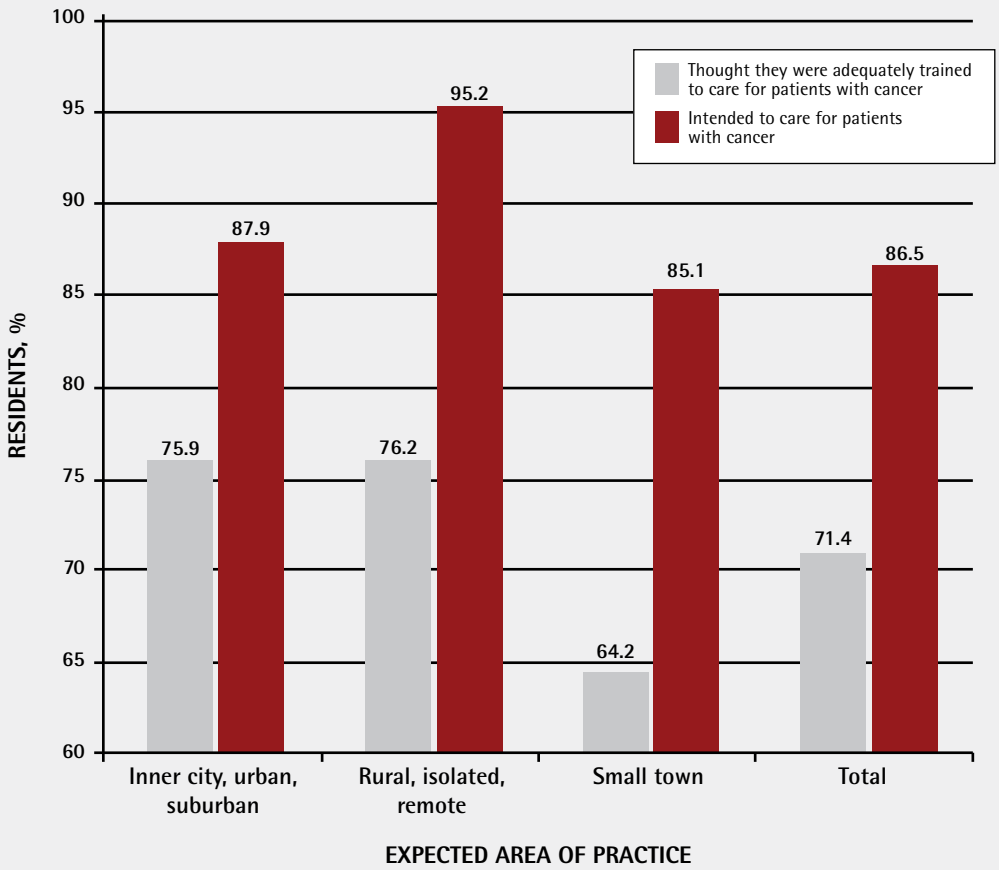
Figure 1. Second-year family medicine residents who intended to provide cancer care and those who thought they were adequately trained to do so, by expected area of practice