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**INTERNATIONAL MEDICAL GRADUATE ASSESSMENT PROCESS FOR YUKON
RESIDENT**

WHITEHORSE – Health and Social Services Minister Brad Cathers has announced that the department is providing support to International Medical Graduate and Yukon resident Xui Mei Zhang.

“Xui Mei (Sue May) Zhang was trained as a medical doctor in China,” Cathers said. “She is working to complete the assessment process that will allow her to fully practice medicine in Canada.”

Zhang is currently practicing under a special license, with supervision from a local physician.

“The Yukon government has been working and will keep working with the Yukon Medical Association (YMA) and other jurisdictions to solve the problem of physician shortages,” Cathers said. “One example is participating in the establishment of a western collaborative that assesses the practice readiness of International Medical Graduates (IMGs) who currently reside in Canada but who have been unable to practice.”

The Western Alliance for Assessment of International Physicians (WAAIP) is a one-year demonstration project funded by Health Canada to improve access to medical services by integrating qualified international graduates into the western and northern Canadian physician workforce.

WAAIP developed a two-phase, competency-based assessment process for IMGs seeking medical licenses in the western provinces and northern territories. The first phase was a structured assessment held in Calgary in November. The second phase is broken into two parts, with clinical practice in a rural setting, and practice in an acute care facility.

“We were as pleased as Xui Mei when she was one of the 25 applicants selected to undergo the process, and just as pleased that she has passed the first phase,” Cathers said. Zhang has been a Yukon resident for 14½ years.

Zhang leaves for Medicine Hat, AB, in January to begin the 11-week clinical assessment. In early May she will know whether or not she will be able to practice without supervision.

“I’m very excited,” Zhang said. “I’ve been working on this for four and a half years on my own. It’s not an easy process but I am very grateful to all the people here who have helped me.”

Zhang credits Dr. Nesta Leduc with inspiring and mentoring her; Dr. MacNicol and Health and Social Services assistant deputy minister Joanne Fairlie for supporting her through the hard process; and doctors Sally MacDonald, Rao Tadipalli, and Bob Zimmerman for helping her with her clinical skills.

Zhang said she particularly wanted to thank Dr. MacDonald for serving as her supervisor during her practice at Whitehorse Medical Clinic.

“Without that support, I wouldn’t have been able to get into WAAIP. I am so happy to have the Yukon government support and look forward to being able to provide a qualified medical service in the near future,” Zhang said.

Cathers also announced a recently introduced phone line, with a recorded message, to help Yukon residents find a physician accepting new patients. The number is 393-6980 and information will be updated regularly.

“Currently the department phones all the physician clinics, every two weeks, to see who is taking new patients. We expect to have that information on the phone line right away,” Cathers said.

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