

Memorial of Chuck Schmitt
Long-time CaSPR Member and Community Recruiter for Dryden, ON



Impact.

It's a powerful word and one I think captures what Chuck Schmitt did for the community of Dryden, ON. Rural recruiters have a tough job. Everything costs more to do: travel, accommodations, time away from work. It also means being successful has a bigger impact. The value that one single physician brings to a rural community is incredible. The direct clinical effects are clear: more patients get better care but the second order effects are just as valuable. The rest of the physicians have less stress as someone else is there to cover call and carry a patient roster/panel. It also helps put other staff in less vulnerable positions. Now because the Emergency room is better staffed the nurses can focus on what they need to do, that means the ward clerks can do what they need to do. It uplifts everyone clinically.

Chuck worked 16 years at Dryden Regional Health Centre. His colleagues were his second family. Chuck was an invaluable member of the team at DRHC; he took great pride in his work and community, championing many important initiatives for the Hospital, including physician and employee recruitment, fundraising, and over the last few years, overseeing the monthly DRHC 50/50 draw. His commitment to his colleagues (through Staff for Staff, wellness, and variety of other committees) the Hospital, and the patients is unparalleled.

Chuck Schmitt did everything he could to improve Dryden. When a new medical school came knocking he became the school's community representative. Dryden became one of the best sites for this school's medical students and residents. Chuck showcased the community during their time there and many have returned to work full time. Chuck even had students live with him when they couldn't find a rental. Talk about dedication.

When the hospital needed funding Chuck took the lead on developing a lottery for the foundation. Announcing the winning numbers on Facebook like a TV host. The hospital put that money to good use. When regional specialties like urology and orthopedics from Thunder Bay wanted to travel to the region



to provide much needed services locally (it is a 4 hour drive to Thunder Bay) Chuck helped make it happen.

He was so good at recruiting doctors that he was able to start creating an environment that encouraged recruitment naturally. If you were a rural doctor looking for a community why wouldn't you pick the one that have a thriving healthcare ecosystem. It became a no brainer because of Chuck's efforts and advocacy.

He also volunteered himself. Refing hockey whenever he had a spare moment. Organizing local sports events and playing himself. The list goes on and on. In the realm of officiating, Chuck earned respect for his fair judgment and commitment to the spirit of competition. Anyone who knew him knew he was an avid supporter of the Toronto Raptors, Winnipeg Jets, Dryden High School Athletics and SIJHL teams. His legacy as a coach, referee, and devoted sports enthusiast will be fondly remembered by all who had the privilege of sharing in his passion.

Chuck's life extended beyond the world of sports; he was a devoted family man who understood the importance of individual connections. He prioritized one-on-one family time, creating special moments tailored to each member's interests. He was an avid angler, he found joy by the water, enjoyed walks with his dog Mia (Puppy Chow), and crib and pancakes on Sundays with his dad.

There is no doubt his death was tragic; it has affected anyone who knew him in any capacity. But I am proud to shine a light on what he did for the community of Dryden. Chucky gave it his all and had an unbelievable impact.

Impact, a truly powerful word doesn't even do it justice.

I am so happy that his memory will live on with this award and it will recognize those with the same spirit and dedication to their rural communities. Chuck would be proud.

Written by: Jamie Sitar, Past CaSPR Chair and long-time Member of CaSPR.

