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Young doctor movements engaging in rural health policy

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Background and Aims: Many family doctors will find themselves working in a rural area at some point during their career. This can be a daunting concept, especially for newly qualified family doctors, as many countries in Europe do not have the infrastructure in place to provide adequate healthcare in rural areas or a support network for new colleagues. An important part of this issue is engaging with policy makers to improve working conditions and health outcomes in rural areas. Doctors play a crucial role in rural communities and should be patient advocates, however, they often do not have an idea how to do this. The aim is to encourage young doctors to start thinking about how they can get involved with informing policy making regarding rural healthcare.

Methods: We will first reflect on some positive examples of engaging policy makers to improve rural healthcare (20 min). This will be followed by a group discussion (50 min) on recognizing rural health issues in your community, what you as an individual or organization can do and how to approach policy makers locally and at a European level. The workshop will conclude with a review of our discussion (10 min).

Conclusion: Ideas and suggestions expressed during the discussion may help to form a strategy for approaching local leaders and learning what key points we should focus on.

Key words: Rural policy, Rural Practice, Young Doctor Movement, Patient advocacy