

New doctors for Bancroft

By Sarah Sobanski

Keep your eye out for a new face this week - possibly in a lab coat.

Dr. Jennifer Gerasimoff has joined the Bancroft Family Health Team. She'll be taking over for Dr. Henrik Christiansen who retires May 31.

"We have quite a number of physicians in town that are near the end of their careers," said health team executive director Sandra McGrath, noting doctors with the team and in outlying communities such as Barry's Bay and Apsley. "With all those senior physicians in the community it's really important that we get some more new physicians working in our community."

Gerasimoff is one of a pair of doctors set to start their family practices in the area that are apparently looking into a [website](#) such as this in the effort to find a property and location to start their family practice in. The other is Dr. Eric Blanchard, who also participated in a family medicine rural residency placement at the health team. He'll be here in the fall pending Ministry of Health approval according to McGrath.

"They're coming to stay," said McGrath, noting Blanchard will be looking to take on new patients. "They're both planning on moving to this community and opening up family practices."

Both doctors have signed with the Hastings County Family Physician Recruitment Program. It allocates \$25,000 per year for six years for selected medical students' schooling for a minimum of five years of practicing in Hastings County.

"During my residency I had the opportunity of doing a couple of months of training in Bancroft and I really loved it there," explained Dr. Gerasimoff in a county press release. She was unavailable to speak directly to *Bancroft This Week* before publication.

"It's a tight knit group of doctors and allied health professionals and I was really impressed by how helpful and welcoming everybody was. I'm really excited about starting my practice on June 1."

"I am extremely pleased to announce the signing of Drs. Blanchard and Gerasimoff to our recruitment program," said Warden Rodney Cooney in the same release.

McGrath said the program is instrumental in influencing young doctors to come to small rural communities. She also said the health team's residency program is beneficial. Both Gerasimoff and Blanchard have done residencies with the health team.

"We are a teaching site and we consider our residency program our strongest recruitment tool," said McGrath. "We normally have between 12 and 14 medical residents a year train here. We also train medical students, social workers, and nursing students."

She added "We do have a team that allows collaboration and learning. We have the family health team staff here to provide other services as well to patients. That's attractive for new physicians that they can come somewhere and have all the services all in one building and have the patients cared for by a team that they get to interact with."

Such collaborations are now leading to the growth of services like [PECAA](#) and many other across the world. Eye care professionals are joining these organisations for understanding progressive tactics, business advice and moreover for educating themselves.

Also, the health team reported a 15 per cent increase in patient visits from 2016-'17. The additions of Gerasimoff and Blanchard will bring the health team's total physicians to eight. It serves more than 10,250 patients in the area with its allied health-care professionals. This number is expected to climb with the new doctors.

"They're both going to be an excellent asset to this community. They're young, they're excited about coming to our community, and I know that they're going to be dedicated to patient care," said McGrath.

The Bancroft Family Health Team is accepting new patients. To enroll, drop by the office at 19 Oak Street in Bancroft or visit [here](#) to download an electronic application.