

**Press Release**  
**Rural Doctor of the Year 2012 Award highlights the importance of good  
management in health care**  
**10 September 2012**

This year's award was made to a doctor whose patients voted with their feet. He turned an under-performing hospital into a centre of choice.

Dr Kelly Gate, from Bethesda hospital in Kwazulu-Natal, was awarded the prestigious Pierre Jacques Rural Doctor of the Year Award at the PHASA/RuDASA conference in Bloemfontein on 6 September 2012.

**About Dr Gate and his achievements**

Dr Kelly Gate did his community service at Bethesda and fell in love with the area. A few years later he returned to the facility with his wife. Two years ago he became the medical manager and since then the service delivery at the facility changed dramatically, and for the better.

Patient and staff now make an effort to go there. This has not been the case for several years prior to his return, as the hospital suffered from doctors shortages and a legacy of mismanagement.

First Dr Gate used his influence, expertise and contingency planning to make the facility run smoothly with a steady staff compliment.

As soon as patients in the community heard that there were more doctors working at the hospital, they went back to Bethesda hospital rather than travelling long distances to another hospital.

In a short time Dr Gate's team has been able to get more HIV positive community members on ARV's and they managed to improve the general wellness of the community they service.

**Research findings confirmed**

Firstly *governance and leadership* and secondly *human resources for health* were identified as the top two challenges for rural health care in research conducted by the Rural Health Advocacy Project. This inspiring story of how a good medical manager turned services around at Bethesda hospital, resulting in patients voting with their feet, confirms the research.

Dr Kelly Gates should be celebrated for his remarkable contribution to rural healthcare in South Africa.

The Rural Doctors Association of Southern Africa (RuDASA) inaugurated this annual award in 2002. The award is given to a rural doctor, working where the needs are tangible, who is judged by the RuDASA Committee to have made a significant contribution towards rural health in the previous year. The award is sponsored by the HIV Clinician's Society and Africa Health Placements.

**For more information, please contact**

- Elma de Vries, RuDASA award organiser, 082 828 6259, [elmadv@cybersmart.co.za](mailto:elmadv@cybersmart.co.za)
- Richard Cooke, Rural Health Advocacy Project, a partnership between RuDASA, SECTION27 and Wits Centre for Rural Health, 084 240 3857, [richard@rhap.org.za](mailto:richard@rhap.org.za)
- Award Recipient Dr Kelly Gate 0824436150 / 035 595 1004 ex 122 / [kellygate@gmail.com](mailto:kellygate@gmail.com)