



Deep River native Kevin McDonald recently won an award of merit from the Ontario Pharmacists Association for his development of a telepharmacy program to serve small hospitals.

Award recognizes telepharmacy program

BY VANCE GUTZMAN

A Deep River native has been honoured by his peers for an innovative new way of dispensing medication in hospitals.

Kevin McDonald, 37, recently received the 2007 Mortar and Pestle award of merit from the Ontario Pharmacists Association (OPA) for his development of a telepharmacy program.

Working out of his home in Ottawa, McDonald is able to go online and access control of a hospital's onsite computer terminal.

There he can view physician orders that have been scanned and converted into an electronic format, and subsequently make any necessary interventions and enter the order.

The system is integrated with the hospital's laboratory system, mean-

ing that McDonald can also review any relevant lab data that could affect medication selection.

His telepharmacy program has grown in leaps and bounds since it first got off the ground at Moose Factory in 2004.

Hometown

That was one of the first places he worked after graduating from university, and the telepharmacy program has since expanded to include hospitals in Timmins, Peterborough and the one right here in Deep River.

"It's been really neat to be able to do some good work for the hometown," McDonald said after receiving the Mortar and Pestle award.

His fellow pharmacists are of the opinion that McDonald's telepharmacy program is pretty neat as well.

"We're proud to have Kevin as an active member and we look forward to his continued presence and contributions to the profession," OPA chairman Ken Burns said.

For McDonald, all the work that went into receiving the prestigious award basically boils down to one thing.

"You're always looking at ways to improve patient care and patient safety," he said.

For small hospitals, like the one here in Deep River, that have trouble recruiting an onsite pharmacist, McDonald's program fills the prescription perfectly.

"He reviews every order and gives direction to our pharmacy tech," said the DRDH's chief nursing officer Lianne Wheeler.

"It's a very innovative program and we're very excited for him that he's received this award."