

The Impact of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) on Rural International Medical Graduate (IMG) Retention

Purpose

This study examines the experiences of International Medical Graduates (IMGs) who participated in Practice Ready Assessment BC (PRA-BC) and completed Return of Service (ROS) placements in rural communities in BC.

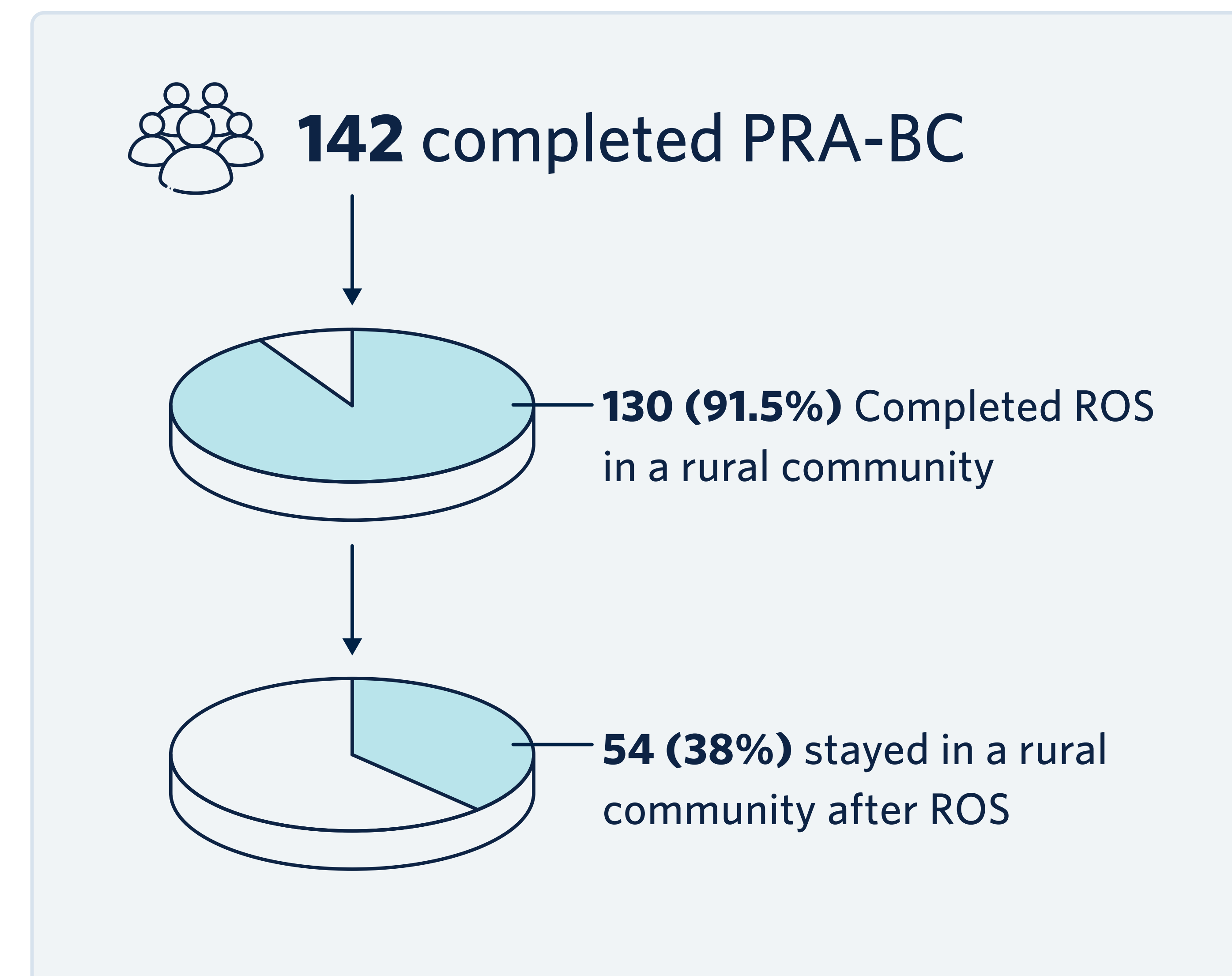
It aims to determine if Continuing Professional Development (CPD) plays a role in supporting the **retention of IMG physicians** in rural communities across BC, and **which qualities of CPD activities have the greatest relation to this retention.**

Background

- About **31.1%** of the physician workforce in British Columbia are IMGs¹.
- The majority of IMGs are **recruited to practice in rural and underserved communities** to help alleviate the health care gaps in such areas. However, there is a lack of research looking at the factors that may influence their retention in rural communities².
- **One of the routes to licensure for IMGs in BC is the PRA-BC program.**
- **CPD programs** like the BC Physician Integration Program (BC-PIP) are also designed to help IMGs transition to practice in BC.
- Various other CPD activities, including rural-focused CPD, are designed to support healthcare workers in **keeping up to date with best practices in rural settings** and addressing gaps in their knowledge and practice³.

Quick Stats

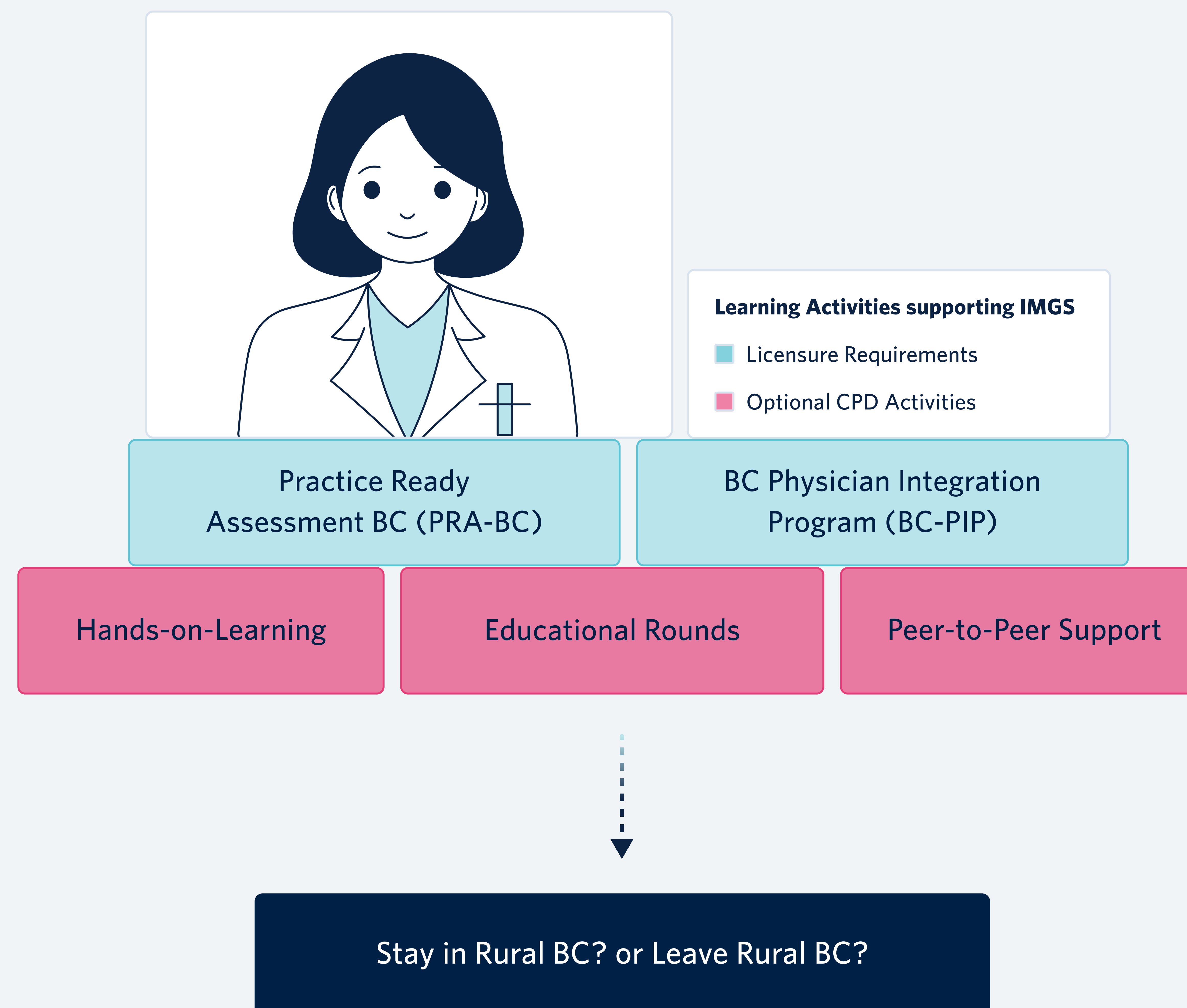
Of **1,123 IMGs** who participated in one or more of UBC CPD's IMG programs (2015-2023)



Can CPD boost IMG physician confidence and retention in rural communities?

The CPD Journey for IMGs in Rural BC

IMG licensure requirements provide a fundamental basis to help build knowledge, skills, and competence pertaining to their integration into BC practice. Throughout their journey, IMGs can engage with various other types of CPD. Access and participation in CPD may contribute to their decision to continue practicing in rural communities in BC.



Mixed-Methods Approach

Causal-comparative analysis will be conducted through SPSS using the following data sources with data from 2015-2024:

- **BC Ministry of Health Retention Data** on PRA-BC participants
- **UBC CPD Registration Lists**, with one for each session of IMG and Rural CPD activities

Semi-structured interviews will be conducted with IMGs who have been practicing in a rural community for four or more years. Interviews will be transcribed, coded, and subject to **qualitative analysis** using NVivo.

Identifying Qualities of CPD Activities

Activity Quality	Types
Mode of Delivery	In-Person, Virtual, Blended
CanMEDS Roles	Medical Expert, Communicator, Collaborator, Leader, Health Advocate, Scholar, Professional
Intended Audience/ Practice Scope	Family Physician, Specialist Physician, Both, Interprofessional
Content Type	Skills-Based (technical, hands-on skills e.g. suturing, etc.) Non-Skills Based (e.g. diagnosis, management, etc.)

Study Implications

- Better understanding of characteristics and nature of CPD programming that is most attractive for rural IMGs and may contribute to retention of rural IMGs.
- Findings can **inform the funding, design and development** of new and existing CPD programs.
- CPD may **enhance IMGs confidence to continue practicing in BC**, thus promoting physician retention.

Future Areas of Exploration

Some areas for further exploration include:

- Factors that hinder or challenge IMGs' decisions to continue practicing in a rural community.
- Potential differences in retention depending on IMG pathway to licensure.
- What external qualities, outside of CPD, may influence retention of IMGs in rural communities.

References

1. A profile of Physicians in Canada. CIHI. Accessed August 21, 2024. <https://www.cihi.ca/en/a-profile-of-physicians-in-canada>.
2. Neiterman E, Bourgeault I, Covell C. What do we know and not know about the professional integration of International Medical Graduates (imgs) in Canada? Healthcare Policy | Politiques de Santé. 2017;12(4):18-32. doi:10.12927/hcpol.2017.25101
3. Curran V, Rourke L, Snow P. A framework for enhancing continuing medical education for Rural Physicians: A summary of the literature. Medical Teacher. 2010;32(11). doi:10.3109/0142159x.2010.519065