

Dr. Yordan Karaivanov, MD

Dr. Yordan Karaivanov is a family physician at the Labrador Health Centre in Happy Valley-Goose Bay. Originally from Bulgaria, Dr. Karaivanov came to Canada in 2001 to join a northern family practice. He is also a Clinical Assistant Professor of Family Medicine at Memorial University.

Dr. Karaivanov graduated medical school in Sofia, Bulgaria in 1995. He specialized in family medicine, which he says offered the right mix of intellectual challenge and practical hands on work.

While looking for new practice opportunities, Dr. Karaivanov stumbled upon a now-defunct website that featured a presentation on rural medicine by Dr. Michael Jong in Happy Valley-Goose Bay. He sent Dr. Jong a brief email asking what it was like to work in Labrador. Dr. Jong replied with a three-page letter about the challenges and rewards of northern medicine. It was enough to convince Dr. Karaivanov and his wife, Dr. Ana Maleeva-Karaivanova, to make the move to Canada.

Today, Dr. Karaivanov provides a wide scope of comprehensive primary care services from his office-based clinic. He also provides hospital-based emergency care, in-patient care and care to the Health Centre's long-term care residents.

He practices culturally-sensitive medicine with a patient population that includes First Nations Innu, Inuit and Métis, as well as European descendants and a growing Filipino community. He also works closely with the Innu community of Sheshatshiu. A major part of his practice includes advocacy work in the community to help reduce the high prevalence of diabetes.

In addition to his daily practice, Dr. Karaivanov offers exercise stress testing and provides services for the local correctional centre. He is also in the process of establishing an opioid dependence treatment program.

Given that Happy Valley-Goose Bay is a regional service centre for the communities of coastal Labrador, Dr. Karaivanov spends a lot of time escorting critical patients from the coast, often in small planes and in bad weather. He has also worked with the local search and rescue teams to provide medical care during rescue missions. The community is also aligned with global air routes and it has served as stopover for international flights with medical emergencies, which Dr. Karaivanov says keeps the job interesting and challenging.

For the past 10 years, Dr. Karaivanov has also been involved in teaching family medicine residents, medical students and nurse practitioners. In 2007, Dr. Karaivanov was awarded the Dr. Yong Kee Jeon Award by Memorial University, which recognizes excellence in teaching Family Medicine residents and contributions to the Discipline of Family Medicine. He is also the recipient of the Society for Rural Physicians of Canada's Rural Service Award in recognition of his efforts to improve health in rural communities and for providing outstanding work, often in challenging circumstances.

During his career, Dr. Karaivanov has been a member of liaison committees with the Labrador Health Centre's mental health department and the RCMP, as well as the Labrador-Grenfell Regional Health Authority and the Innu First Nation.

He became involved with Newfoundland and Labrador Medical Association (NLMA) in 2007, serving a two-year term on the NLMA Board of Directors and on the NLMA Nominating Committee. He rejoined

the Board in 2012 and was installed as the Association's 88th President at the NLMA 2013 annual general meeting.

Two key priorities during his term as President include addressing the needs of rural physicians and international medical graduates, with the overall goal of improving recruitment and retention in rural communities. He will also focus his efforts on engaging with NLMA members to increase member involvement and value for membership.

Dr. Karaivanov resides in Happy Valley-Goose Bay with his wife Ana, a recent graduate of the family medicine program at MUN and their two children. In his spare time he enjoys gardening, fishing and reading about politics and international affairs.

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