

...proudly announces the Physician, Midwife or Nurse Practitioner of the month for

January 2024:

Dr. James “Andy” Spencer

One of the best examples of a “Full Spectrum Family Physician” that I can think of!

Department of Family Medicine, Vernon Jubilee Hospital



The VJHPS is pleased to announce **Dr. James “Andy” Spencer as January 2024’s Medical Staff Member of the Month**. We salute Dr. Spencer for exemplifying the qualities of an excellent physician, and we are pleased to have him as a respected member of our medical staff.

Background and Training:

- High School: W.L. Seaton Secondary School, Vernon, BC
- Undergraduate School: BSc (Honours) Biochemistry, University of Alberta
- Medical School: University of Alberta
- Residency: Family Medicine, University of Victoria

Nominator's Comments (Kira McClellan, Family & Hospitalist Medicine):

For somebody who I thought I knew quite well, I sure learned a lot about Andy when we sat down for tea recently in his beautiful naturally-lit corner office on the 3rd floor of the Sterling Centre. Despite an intimidatingly-long day sheet staring at us both from his large EMR screen, and his office mates arriving to start their busy days, we were both able to relax and enjoy the tea (lemon-peach-ginger) for 30 minutes while he shared with me some of his less-known history.

Born and mostly-raised in Vernon, Andy grew up with 2 siblings and graduated from Seaton Secondary. He was not a self-declared jock or nerd, but rather a “fierce introvert” who enjoyed problem solving. He played the trombone and bass guitar and aspired to be a jazz musician.

Despite his skill in both the brass and string sections of the band, Andy pivoted after high school. He discovered an interest and aptitude for the sciences, and feeling this would pair nicely with his innate ability to problem-solve, he decided to abandon the full-time musician plan and embark on a career in medicine – the first in his family to do so. Despite his introverted nature, he enjoys interacting with others and his desire to help patients solve their problems and literally “follow them through every stage of their life” led him to a residency in Family Medicine.

He spent 4 months of his residency placement in Salmon Arm, with some electives in Vernon, and tried to convince his significant other, Dr. Lindsey Fisher (an Albertan!), that Vernon would be a good fit for them to plant their roots. Lucky for us, Lindsey agreed to give it a try. They immediately moved to Vernon after residency, bought a house, acquired 2 golden retrievers, and not too much later found themselves to be the proud parents of 2 beautiful children; a son Grayson, age 3, and a daughter Avery, age 1. Somewhere in there they invested in a renovation of office space at the Sterling Centre to join the Centreville Clinic and both started their own family practices (gasp, an endangered breed! – and that was even before the LFP ;).

Andy is the most broadly-scoped family physician that I know. He provides longitudinal family medicine care to a large panel of patients, inpatient medical care, primary obstetrical care, and palliative care including MAiD provisions. He feels strongly about advocating for patient care and has been involved in leadership, both as a department head (Family Medicine) and through the Palliative Program.

To recharge his battery, Andy enjoys playing squash at Rosters, downhill skiing, and.....wait for it.....he has another job completely unrelated to medicine! Andy co-owns and manages Obsidian Games, a board and card game store located in the Just For You Spa complex near Burger King. His favourite board game is Agricola and he can be found q2Friday nights at the store working. Who knew?!

Andy has worked hard to create balance in his life and acknowledges that one “has to make time” for the energizing parts, otherwise “the things that bring you down will burn you out”. Wise words that we should all live by.

Congratulations to Andy, it is an absolute privilege to be your colleague.