“I completed my final practicum in the rural nursing setting, and would highly recommend it for fourth year students. My final practicum was at the Canmore General Hospital in acute care (medicine, surgery, paediatrics, postpartum), labour and delivery (including O.R. experience during caesarean sections), and emergency. Being exposed to so many different specialty areas provided me with insight into what areas I am interested in. I was never the type of adrenaline-loving student who would have picked emergency as a choice for my placement. I thought I wouldn’t enjoy it, but having exposure to emergency nursing in
Canmore changed my opinion, and my idea of what emergency nursing was. Turns out I loved emergency nursing, and I loved having exposure to it in a smaller setting. Having the ability to rotate through so many different specialty areas really changed my mindset on a lot of areas. It also kept each day interesting, as no day or patient was the same. Even in acute care, each patient had a completely different diagnosis from one to the other, unlike many of the units in the city, which specialize. This did require broadening my knowledge base to cover all areas, which was overwhelming and difficult some days.
Although this placement challenged me, a huge factor in my amazing experience was the staff members. The staff members at the CGH were not only just kind staff members; they were a close-knit family who were so supportive and welcoming. I never felt afraid to ask questions to any of the staff. Although I had two specific preceptors in my placement, I really felt a part of the family as everyone went out of their ways to take me under their wing. If there was something interesting going on with another nurse’s patient, they would always let me know. Canmore was also a great place for me to become more confident in speaking to physicians, especially in the emergency department. For example, on night shift in the emergency room
there is one physician, and one RN, so you really have to get comfortable talking to physicians and consulting them about patients. The physicians were usually so patient, kind, and willing to teach.

I would highly recommend rural nursing to students trying to decide on a final practicum setting. My experience was the best placement I’ve had, because of the broad experiences, and support I received by all staff members. As a student in rural nursing, you really get the best of all nursing worlds. Even if you don’t think you will want to work in rural nursing once you graduate, it is a great place to figure out what you enjoy, and what you don’t enjoy. “

Claire Denton (FoN Class of 2017)