

In larger cities and towns, surely it makes more sense to have hospitalists, up-to-date and skilled in the appropriate areas, see patients in hospital.

I understand and agree with the idea of continuity of care for patients. I recognize that this is an important value that the proponents of “full” comprehensive care espouse. But I’m surprised that there is no dialogue about equivalent values of prudent resource management and excellence and how to balance these within our system.

What is a family doctor? Someone who provides continuity of care across all illnesses and age groups, or someone who focuses on ongoing care, with expertise in chronic and preventable illnesses? Or both? There must be room for more discussion, respect, and consideration than we have had in the past.

—*Sophie Wilson MD CCFP*  
Guelph, Ont  
by e-mail

## Moving story

Today I saw a patient in the office for her annual checkup and Pap test. That was nothing unusual, except that she lives in Portage la Prairie, Man, and my office is in Victoria, BC. She had moved from Victoria to Portage la Prairie in August and had tried to find a family doctor. She visited the 3 family doctors who were accepting new

patients, only to be told by all 3 that she was “too complicated.” This patient is a friendly 31-year-old woman. She had a nephrectomy (for a non-functioning kidney) and she had a stroke 3 years ago (from which she recovered fully). She would like to start a family with her husband, but she believes she cannot do this because she has no family doctor, and therefore no medical care, in her community. She had to come back to Victoria for her checkup, and she is probably going to leave Portage la Prairie to move back to Victoria because she cannot find a doctor.

This got me thinking. I know that she is not the only person in Canada in this situation. What has our medical system become? What happened to universal health care? What about the Hippocratic Oath? I am ashamed that there are so many doctors who refuse to see patients just because they have health problems—aren’t they the patients who need doctors?

—*Melina Thibodeau MD CCFP*  
Victoria, BC  
by e-mail

## Stoned by lack of evidence

In the debate on medical marijuana in the December 2006 issue,<sup>1</sup> Dr Ware wrote, “Cannabis has not yet been formally evaluated in clinical trials.” His conclusion that “there is solid scientific rationale for therapeutic use