



Letters ♦ Correspondance

Health care just a phone call away

The Resources report by Dr Kahane et al¹ illustrated how physicians can access community services for their patients in the greater Toronto area with The Blue Book. Community Information Toronto is the producer of The Blue Book. They have also created a provincewide service directory, which is available to patients through Telehealth Ontario. Registered nurses with Telehealth Ontario can provide callers with telephone numbers for local services during discussions about their health concerns.

For example, callers can be given the numbers for new mothers' groups or meetings of the Alzheimer's Society, depending on their needs. Telehealth Ontario is a toll-free, bilingual, 24-hour-a-day service that patients can call directly. It enables patients to take advantage of services available to them locally.

—Sue MacLean, MD, CCFP
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by e-mail

Reference

1. Kahane S, Jackson-Thorne J, Greiver M, for the North York General Hospital CME committee. Blue Book project. Providing community information to family practices [Resources]. *Can Fam Physician* 2001;47:2529.

Volunteer clinic for the uninsured

Since its inception in May 2000, a non-profit Volunteer Health Clinic for the Uninsured has grown to meet the needs of its community. It is a

partnership program between the community and the Department of Family Medicine and Community Services at the Scarborough Hospital in Ontario. Patients have access to medical assessments, medications, laboratories, and specialists. To date, approximately 2000 patients have been seen.

The clinic, however, provides more than just medical care. It offers an excellent teaching and learning environment for the family medicine residents training at the Scarborough Hospital through the Department of Family and Community Medicine at the University of Toronto.

Family medicine residents are sent to the clinic to work alongside community family physicians during their family medicine rotations. With limited resources, uncertain patient

follow up, and a variety of community resources to choose from, residents work with public health nurses to meet the needs of patients. The clinic allows residents to identify key community resources for patients seeking shelter, food, child care, and medical care. Family medicine residents also have the opportunity to learn from one-on-one teaching from family physicians. Family medicine residents can be involved in managing patients who require obstetrical care in hospital by attending deliveries and providing postnatal care, thus allowing for continuity.

The four principles of family medicine outlined by the College of Family Physicians of Canada¹ identify that family medicine is community based, family physicians should be a resource to a defined population, family physicians should be skilled clinicians, and the doctor-patient relationship is central. The clinic provides family medicine residents with the opportunity to build on these principles. The role of family medicine residents at the clinic demonstrates the ongoing commitment to excellence in education by this community-based residency training program.

Reference

1. College of Family Physicians of Canada. *CFPC's residency program accreditation and certification*. Mississauga, Ont: College of Family Physicians of Canada; July 1997.

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