



# Residents' Page

## You and the College

John Campbell, MD

Discussions at the national, regional, and program levels show that many family practice residents are uncertain what role the College of Family Physicians of Canada (CFPC) has in their lives. I hope this article in some way helps to enlighten them by providing information about the College and some of its services.

The CFPC is a national association, founded in 1954, dedicated to supporting family practitioners in providing the highest quality health care to their patients. The organization accomplishes this in large part through its regulation of postgraduate family medicine programs and the development of high-quality continuing medical education (CME). Postgraduate programs are regulated through periodic evaluation and accreditation of each family medicine program; regulation directly affects the academic life of each family resident. Without accreditation, no one vouches for programs. Upon completion of residency, former residents benefit from the College's role in education through the Mainpro® program introduced in 1995.

Membership in the CFPC is free to each first-year resident. Second-year residents pay a small membership fee as part of their total examination cost; upon graduation, membership in the College is voluntary. To maintain your standing, you will be required to complete a mandatory amount of CME during a 5-year cycle. (The CFPC was the first such medical organization to decide that ongoing education for doctors was a good idea; others quickly followed.) The CME program recently has been substantially revised, and requirements are actually quite reasonable.

Membership also offers several financial benefits. As residents we are entitled to discount fees on the Scotia Professional Plan, a banking package that also includes the RSP services of Scotia McLeod. Meloche Monnex also offers preferred rates on home and auto insurance, and after graduation, Wellington insurance can assist you with a business insurance package. We can also access a Platinum Plus MasterCard, Sprint Canada long-distance programs, and discounts with Hertz car rentals. Details of all these options are on the website under "Membership."

Of more immediate and academic interest, membership in the College provides each resident with access to the CFPC library. This gives you five professional literature searches per year and up to 25 photocopied articles at no cost. Also, you can borrow books, have quick searches performed, and avail yourself of a consultation service to help with information and retrieval problems.

The College also publishes its own clinical journal, *Canadian Family Physician*; has Annual Scientific Assemblies (ASAs); and holds a yearly Family Medicine Forum (FMF). The FMF provides residents with an opportunity to attend formal sessions on just about any aspect of family medicine while interacting with family doctors from diverse practices across the country. The forthcoming FMF in Toronto, Ont, really is a must, as it coincides with the 50th anniversary of our College.

The CFPC website has a dedicated residents' resource page linked to many useful sites. Information accessed from these links includes a list of all third-year programs, emergency medicine applications, Pearls™ for residents, and the new

on-line version of the Self Learning® programs. The latter is an exceptional resource, which allows residents to assess their knowledge on topics relevant to family medicine using various testing modalities, one of which is the short-answer management problem format (SAMP)—the very same sort of question we encounter on the written component of the CFPC's qualifying examination. As a result, any residents with access to the Internet can get an objective assessment of their knowledge base while practising for their examinations.

The Certification Examination in Family Medicine is the final interaction between each resident and the CFPC. In the last 6 months of your program and on the recommendation of both your dean and postgraduate director, you will be eligible to sit the examination: both written and oral components. The written examination is composed of approximately 40 to 45 SAMPs and takes about 6 hours. The oral component consists of five simulated office oral examinations (SOOs), each lasting 15 minutes. A full description of the examination that includes times, fees, frequently asked questions, and detailed information about SAMPs and SOOs is provided on the CFPC website ([www.cfpc.ca](http://www.cfpc.ca)).

The College has a large role in residents' lives: it accredits the programs in which they study, provides numerous tools for this endeavour, and (through an examination process in conjunction with work done at the program level) provides certification in the exciting field of family medicine. I hope this article gives you some insight into how the CFPC functions and perhaps creates some interest in becoming more involved both as a resident and after graduation. ❁

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