



# Our community moving forward

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When I was installed as President of the College of Family Physicians of Canada (CFPC) a year ago, I established "Community" as my theme of office. I believe community is deeply embedded in family medicine, that it defines who we are and what we do. And during my course of travels across this great country and abroad, I have seen nothing that would dispel this belief.

Beyond the observation that family physicians are community based, I have also seen how the CFPC, in a collective sense, is also embedded in the community. The CFPC is itself a community (ie, a body of people in a learned occupation) but acts within the larger community on behalf of its membership and the discipline of family medicine. To borrow from one of the 4 principles of family medicine, the CFPC is based in and is a member of the health care community. It is influenced by broader social factors in the community at large and responds to its members' needs, mobilizes appropriate resources to address their needs, and adapts to changing circumstances. The CFPC is part of a network of organizations and is skilled at collaborating with and, where appropriate, leading others.

## New realities

At an organizational level, change does not always occur rapidly, as many ideas and projects can take years of hard work and planning before they can be established. Even then it can take a long time before they are fully embraced.

Some ideas that have been in development for years have now become a reality. In March of this year, the CFPC Board voted unanimously to acknowledge family medicine as a specialty. While this was a historic moment for family medicine in Canada, it is still only at the threshold. It will take some time before this concept becomes a part of the fabric of medicine in this country.

One of the College's current projects is to focus on family physicians with special interests or focused practices—a complex domain that is changing even as the College is considering how best to approach it. This is an example of how the CFPC responds to a changing reality in the provision of health care, not only in Canada, but also in much of the world.

Earlier this year, the CFPC Board approved the establishment of a Section of Medical Students with full voting privileges. Much of the impetus for this change has

flowed from the successful establishment of Family Medicine Interest Groups in each of Canada's 17 medical schools. This is a recognition of the importance placed on providing support for students and ensuring that all medical students, including those that will enter other specialties, have a more complete understanding of the central and critical role that family doctors play in the delivery of health care in Canada.

## Partnerships

The College is also collaborating with other organizations to improve the delivery of health care for patients across the country. Together with the Canadian Medical Association, we have established a Primary Care Wait-Time Partnership. This partnership will report on the full scope of wait-time experiences that patients and their family doctors face every day in Canada, and will look at ways that the system might better manage these wait times to benefit all parties involved.

The CFPC also continues to work with the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada, exploring all the aspects of the relationships between family doctors and other specialists and how these relationships affect patient care in Canada.

And as the CFPC is beginning to consider how best to work with family practice nurses and nurse practitioners, it has invited them to this year's Family Medicine Forum for the first time.

These partnerships and projects are only a few examples of CFPC's important work—most of which occurs behind the scenes and might not be appreciated for some time to come.

## Passing the reins

It has been my pleasure for the past year to represent the membership of the College at many gatherings across the country. I have thoroughly enjoyed meeting so many dedicated family doctors from various places. I have greatly appreciated the support of the Executive, Board, and staff of the College, as well as my colleagues at home in Victoria, BC.

It is with pride that I am now passing the reins of office to Dr Ruth Wilson of Kingston, Ont. Dr Wilson has practised throughout Canada and abroad, and she brings a wealth of experience, ranging from rural medicine to urban teaching. Dr Wilson has been an outstanding leader in our discipline for years, and she will represent the College well in her year as President. 🍁