



Mandatory continuing professional development *Helping family physicians meet the requirements*

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Starting with Quebec (July 1, 2007) and Saskatchewan (January 1, 2008), most regulatory authorities across Canada will soon be introducing mandatory continuing professional development (CPD) requirements for all physicians. In some provinces, these CPD requirements will be part of revalidation programs being developed by licensing bodies.

Many physicians are aware that regulatory bodies throughout the developed world are expected to monitor physicians' competence and performance throughout their careers. Historically, the programs and protocols used to carry out this responsibility have been somewhat informal and lacking in standardized approaches. Responding to public pressure, many nations have now introduced more focused revalidation programs, including not only mandatory CPD, but also such elements as practice audits, feedback from patients and colleagues, peer assessments, and in some jurisdictions, examinations that must be taken every 5 to 7 years throughout a physician's career. The mandatory CPD and revalidation programs being introduced in Canada are in keeping with this international movement.

The College of Family Physicians of Canada (CFPC) has participated in numerous national and provincial forums deliberating revalidation programs. We consistently support the introduction of these programs, but we believe they should be developed with meaningful input from physicians themselves and should be focused on helping physicians achieve relevant lifelong learning objectives, rather than on disciplinary or punitive measures.

Benefits of Mainpro

Most physicians will not find the new mandatory CPD requirements particularly onerous, as they already participate in regular CPD activities. For those who are members of the CFPC or the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada (RCPSC), the news is especially good—compliance with the Colleges' Mainpro and Maintenance of Certification programs will be recognized by the licensing authorities as fully meeting their new CPD requirements. Those physicians who successfully complete the credit requirements of the CFPC or the RCPSC will not need to do anything further.

The CFPC membership fees include access to Mainpro and all the program supports offered by our College, including maintaining and managing each member's CPD record and verifying or providing reports of credits earned as required by the licensing authorities. Participation in a single

program—Mainpro—will ensure that family physicians can meet the CPD requirements of many different organizations at the same time, including our College, the provincial licensing bodies, regional health authorities, and hospital or other institutional boards.

Because some provincial regulatory authorities have stated that the only CPD programs they will recognize as meeting their requirements are those offered by the CFPC or RCPSC, the Boards of both Colleges have agreed to offer non-members access to our Mainpro and Maintenance of Certification programs. An annual fee for this service will ensure that non-members can access the Mainpro credit record system and can have our College maintain their records and provide required reports on their behalf. It will not mean, however, that these physicians are College members or that they are eligible for College credentials (ie, Certification or Fellowship in Family Medicine [CCFP or FCFP]) or for other membership benefits.

Calling all family physicians

In provinces where compulsory CPD revalidation programs are introduced by licensing bodies, family doctors wishing to join or rejoin the College will be welcomed with a 50% reduced fee for the first 2 years of their membership (an extension of the usual 1-year reduced rate offered to new members). Those who previously held CCFP status but relinquished it when they did not maintain their College membership can rejoin the College, and, upon submission of their required CPD credits, will be eligible to reacquire their CCFP and become part of the specialty of family medicine in Canada.

To date, all licensing authorities considering mandatory CPD programs have indicated they will recognize those who complete the requirements of the CFPC Mainpro program as fully complying with their own requirements. Some licensing authorities have stipulated that *all* physicians in their jurisdictions must participate in the CFPC or RCPSC CPD programs.

Although Mainpro is a time-tested, nationally and internationally respected program that offers all the CPD elements required by the regulatory authorities, we recognize that in some jurisdictions there will be other CPD options. The CFPC would be pleased to work together with other accrediting and program-developing organizations to ensure that all family doctors throughout Canada have access to high-quality and user-friendly CPD programs with the best services possible to help them meet the new requirements of their licensing bodies. 