Family Doctor Week in Canada
Celebrating family doctors

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In 2004, the College of Family Physicians of Canada (CFPC) instituted what has now become a part of our annual calendar, the Family Medicine Forum (FMF). Each year, the week of FMF has become known as Family Doctor Week in Canada. Supported by statements from federal and provincial Members of Parliament, Family Doctor Week recognizes the outstanding contribution made by family doctors from all corners of our country to the health care of Canadians. It is a time to acknowledge the physicians who adhere to the principles that define the discipline of family medicine; these are skilled clinicians, teachers, and researchers who are community based; act as an invaluable resource to individual patients, families, and populations; and, very important, are focused on keeping the needs of their patients at the centre of all they do.

Family Doctor Week is an opportunity for family physicians to acknowledge their colleagues, for communities to salute their family physicians, and for family doctors and patients to celebrate the doctor-patient relationship that makes family practice special.

Week’s events
Family Doctor Week 2007 will take place from October 8 to 13. During October 11 to 13, more than 1500 family physicians will gather in Winnipeg, Man, for the centrepiece activity, which will feature a number of special events, including the following:

• The CFPC’s National President, Dr Tom Bailey, will give the 2007 “State of the College” address.
• A national media conference will focus on issues of prime concern to Canadian family doctors and patients.
• The All Members Forum will provide an opportunity for members to meet and share thoughts with CFPC leaders.
• Federal, provincial, and local political leaders will give keynote messages.
• Exemplary family physicians from each province identified by peers and patients as having embodied the principles of family medicine will be instated as Canada’s Family Physicians of the Year.
• A $10 000 scholarship will be presented to outstanding medical students from each of Canada’s 17 medical schools who have demonstrated interest in a career in family medicine.
• The 2007 CFPC medical student and family medicine resident leadership awards will recognize future leaders in family medicine.
• Family physicians selected by provincial chapters to recognize contributions to their communities and practices will receive our introductory Awards of Excellence.
• A new award will recognize achievements of family physicians in their first few years of practice.
• Ms Gail Asper, who spearheaded the proposal for the new Canadian Museum of Human Rights, will lecture on “Human Rights and Health Care.”
• Dr Louise Nasmith, who is a CFPC Past President and cochair of the Child Health Initiative, will address the topic “Caring for Canada’s Children.”
• Hannah Taylor, an 11-year-old girl from Winnipeg who established The Ladybug Foundation to support the homeless and hungry, will speak about “Canada’s Children Caring for Canadians.”
• The CFPC will present donations on behalf of our members to support both the Canadian Museum of Human Rights and The Ladybug Foundation.
• Convocation and installation of our new CFPC National President, Dr Ruth Wilson, will be followed by the FMF celebration, featuring a special performance by Winnipeg’s own international recording star Chantal Kreviazuk.

Exposure
Family Doctor Week brings attention to the important role played by Canada’s family physicians. Public polls, released each year during Family Doctor Week, repeatedly reinforce how highly Canadians value having family doctors. New models of practice with innovative remuneration strategies recommended to governments by the CFPC and our peers in other medical associations are finally starting to address the critical need for increased support and incomes for family physicians. Medical schools are recognizing the need to increase the exposure and credibility of family medicine as a core specialty—equal to all other specialties—that students should consider as a future career. The Family Medicine Interest Groups, supported by the CFPC, are now thriving in many medical schools, and the College has established a Section of Medical Students to help further the links between family physicians and students.

These and many more issues will be the focus of discussion, debate, and celebration during Family Doctor Week in Canada. Through the messages delivered during the week, the CFPC will thank and recognize all family physicians, whether they’re College members or not, for their great contributions to the care of their patients and communities, and we’re pleased to provide an opportunity for all Canadians to join us in doing so.