



Celebrating Family Doctor Week in Canada

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November 24 to 29, 2008, will mark the College of Family Physicians of Canada's (CFPC's) fifth annual Family Doctor Week in Canada—a special time set aside each year to recognize the achievements of the thousands of family physicians practising throughout our nation. In addition to various events and ceremonies, including tributes from provincial and federal Members of Parliament, the week provides an opportunity for family physicians and their patients to reflect on the relationships that have developed out of the ongoing health care experiences they have shared. These unique relationships give meaning to the specialty of family medicine and explain why population health outcomes improve when people have better access to family doctors.¹

Canadians value their family physicians

A recent survey conducted by the Ontario College of Family Physicians found that 86% of Ontarians consider family doctors to be the most important part of the health care system; 95% want their family physicians to provide or coordinate the greater part of their care.² The Canadian Medical Association's 2008 Ipsos Reid survey found that Canadian adults who had family doctors were more satisfied with access to care and overall quality of the health care system than those without family physicians.³

Although Family Doctor Week is meant to be celebrated in every community, many activities will take place at the CFPC's Family Medicine Forum from November 27 to 29 in Toronto, Ont. More than 2500 family doctors from all over Canada will have the chance to meet new colleagues, rekindle old friendships, present papers, share practice experiences, update knowledge and skills, and learn about one another's contributions to health care. Participants will attend a range of sessions dealing with the clinical, teaching, research, and health system challenges they face every day. Interprofessional team approaches will be featured, with opportunities for family physicians, medical students, residents, nurses, and others to learn together.

Special accolades


One of the week's highlights will be the presentation of the CFPC Research and Education Foundation's Honours and Awards, recognizing the accomplishments of an array of family doctors. Medical students and family medicine residents, selected by peers and teachers at each Canadian medical school, will be presented with

CFPC Leadership Awards. An additional 17 outstanding students will each receive a \$10 000 CFPC-Scotiabank Family Medicine Scholarship. At Convocation we will present Certification (CCFP) and Fellowship (FCFP) to those who have demonstrated their special competency in the discipline of family medicine and their ongoing commitment to lifelong learning in our specialty. We will also award this year's major awards: the Victor Johnston Oration to Dr Joanna Bates of Vancouver, BC; the Donald I. Rice Award to Dr David Tannenbaum of Toronto, Ont; the Ian McWhinney Family Medicine Education Award to Dr David Gass of Halifax, NS; Family Medicine Researcher of the Year to Dr Ann Macaulay of Montreal, Que; and the Jean-Pierre Despins Award to Dr Philip Berger of Toronto, Ont.

A crowning moment of Family Doctor Week in Canada will be the public announcement of Canada's Family Physicians of the Year on November 26. The winners are selected by each provincial Chapter via nominations and testimonials from peers and patients. This year's recipients will be Dr Susan Harris of British Columbia; Dr Mark Sosnowski of Alberta; Dr Brenda Hookenson of Saskatchewan; Dr Michael Penrose of Manitoba; Dr Frank Martino of Ontario; Dr Jean Gregoire of Quebec; Dr Tom Laughlin of New Brunswick; Dr Doug Meek of Prince Edward Island; Dr Susan Atkinson of Nova Scotia; and Dr Judy Ophel of Newfoundland and Labrador. These family physicians—selected for the extraordinary care they provide and for their ability to bring the principles of family medicine to life on a daily basis—will receive Reg L. Perkin Awards in honour of their achievements.

Here's to you

Family Doctor Week celebrates all family physicians in Canada. It recognizes their commitment to patients and to the health and well-being of our population—something not easily achieved in these trying times.

The CFPC thanks and salutes you. You are the reason Canadians say that family doctors are the most important part of their health care system. You are the reason we hold Family Doctor Week in Canada. 

References

1. Starfield B, Shi L. Policy relevant determinants of health: an international perspective. *Health Policy* 2002;60(3):201-18.
2. An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure—but up to 879,000 Ontarians without a family doctor will suffer the consequences from a lack of preventative care. Toronto, ON: Canadian Health Reference Guide; 2008 Aug 27. Available from: www.chrgonline.com/news_detail.asp?ID=95810. Accessed 2008 Sep 3.
3. Canadian Medical Association. *8th annual national report card on health care*. Ottawa, ON: Canadian Medical Association; 2008. Available from: www.cma.ca/multimedia/CMA/Content/Images/Inside_cma/Annual_Meeting/2008/GC_Bulletin/National_Report_Card_EN.pdf. Accessed 2008 Sep 3.

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