



'Tis the season

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At this time of year, many of us pause to reflect on what has transpired in the months—or even years—leading to this point in our lives. For family physicians in Canada, although challenges abound, there is much to be grateful for. We live in a free country with a wealth of resources and services to provide for and protect us and our loved ones. Careers in family practice, particularly for those with comprehensive, continuing care practices, offer family physicians unparalleled rewards as a result of relationships built with patients over time. There is probably no benefit in any branch of medicine that comes close to offering what years as a family doctor for a community of patients provides for family physicians.

In Canada, while the environment is changing and other health professionals are being granted expanded scopes of practice, family doctors are still highly valued and, in fact, recognized as vital to ensuring the best possible health outcomes for our population. Greater system supports are needed to facilitate the transition to new models of practice for more family doctors, but those who have embraced change report that they and their patients are deriving considerable benefit. The future beckons family physicians to continue to provide and coordinate substantial portions of the medical care of Canadians, while also assuming increasing responsibility in areas such as chronic disease management, primary and secondary prevention, and public health—using the ongoing relationships they have with their patients as the base upon which to build these important roles.

This year the College of Family Physicians of Canada (CFPC) addressed a variety of issues related to the present and future of our discipline. Considerable challenges were met in undergraduate and postgraduate education, research, continuing professional development, and interprofessional and intraprofessional relations. The work done by our National College and Chapter staff on behalf of our members has been outstanding. As we give thanks to many at this time of year, National and Chapter staff members who commit themselves day in and day out to College initiatives should be at the top of our lists. Unfortunately, there are too many to name, but I would like to at least acknowledge the leaders of our staff teams:

At the National College, I thank Dr Francine Lemire, Associate Executive Director: Professional Affairs; Dr Paul Rainsberry, Associate Executive Director: Academic Family Medicine; Ms Theresa Maguire-Garber, Chief Operating Officer; Dr Bernard Marlow, Director,

Continuing Professional Development; Ms Inese Grava-Gubins, Director, Research; Mr Eric Mang, Director, Health Policy and Government Relations; Mr David Dehaas, Director, Publications and Communications; Ms Verena Herten-Greaven, Director, Finance and Human Resources; Mr Dave Williams, Director, Information Technology; Ms Lynn Dunikowski, Director, Library Services; Ms Sarah Scott, Executive Manager, Governance and Strategic Planning; and Ms Judy McCracken, Executive Assistant. In addition we welcomed 2 outstanding new Consulting Directors: Dr Ivy Oandasan in Academic Family Medicine and Dr Ruth Wilson in Health Policy.

I also thank the following Chapter executive directors and administrators: British Columbia, Dr Jim Thorsteinson and Mr Ian Tang; Alberta, Ms Peggy Maher; Saskatchewan, Ms Lois Hislop; Manitoba, Dr Gary Beazley and Ms Susan Patek; Ontario, Ms Jan Kasperski; Quebec, Ms Nicole Cloutier; New Brunswick, Mr James Risdon; Prince Edward Island, Ms Rose Burke-Perry; Nova Scotia, Ms Cathie Carroll; and Newfoundland, Ms Debbie Rideout.

All of us who make up the CFPC staff have the luxury of working with some incredible volunteers—a huge thank-you to our National and Chapter Executive Committees, our Board of Directors, our Section and Committee Chairs, and the hundreds of members who contribute to our committees, working groups, and task forces. Personally I wish to thank the 2010 National Executive Committee: Cathy MacLean (President), Sarah Kredentser (Past President), Rob Boulay (President Elect and Chair of the Board), Sandy Buchman (Honorary Secretary-Treasurer), and Harold Dion and Nirvair Levitt (Members at Large).

The CFPC is strong and growing stronger each year. The past decade has seen our membership almost double to its current 25000 members. Our annual conference, Family Medicine Forum, has increased from 550 attendees in 1999 to an average of 3000 in the past 3 years. Students, residents, and physicians in their first 5 years of practice are now a vital, active part of the CFPC. Our committees include those focused on environmental health, global health, and diversity and equity; a new Section has been introduced to meet the needs of family physicians with special interests who have been requesting opportunities to network with colleagues with similar practice patterns.

The future of family medicine in Canada is bright, thanks to the commitments of thousands of family doctors in communities large and small. I thank you all for your dedication to family medicine and to our College—the voice of family medicine in Canada—and wish you and yours a healthy, happy holiday and the best for 2011. ❁

Cet article se trouve aussi en français à la page 1379.