

First Five Years in Family Practice initiative

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The CFPC is supporting new family physicians through its First Five Years in Family Practice initiative.

UK origins

The First5 concept was developed in 2008 by the Associates in Training Committee of the Royal College of General Practitioners in the United Kingdom.^{1,2} The aim was to address concerns from trainees that, at the end of a very supportive training program, they experienced an “off-the-cliff” feeling where suddenly they were out on their own as independent practitioners in the vast and ever changing world of modern general practice. The trainees committee believed that the Royal College of General Practitioners was well placed to support the transition from trainee to established GP using existing College structures. First5 is about empowering the next generation of new GPs, encouraging our energy and enthusiasm, and equipping us with the skills needed to lead the profession in the years ahead.

The First5 concept is based on 5 main pillars:

- Connecting with the College: promoting a sense of belonging and appropriate representation for the First5 cohort within the College
- Facilitating networks: encouraging peer support and mentoring through development of local networks
- Supporting revalidation: offering support through revalidation, which aims to assess whether GPs meet current professional standards (which is in line with a direction taken by most provinces in Canada)
- Career mentorship: highlighting the opportunities a career in general practice offers and helping new family physicians get the most out of family medicine
- Continuing professional development: identifying areas of continuing professional development that members in the first 5 years of practice think are not adequately covered and developing materials that will address these learning needs

The concept seems to have captured the essence of what being a new GP is all about, and several countries, including Canada, have been keen to develop their own First5 programs.

“First Five” comes to Canada

In 2010, the CFPC embarked on its own First Five Years in Family Practice journey. New family physicians from

each region in Canada were recruited to sit on a First Five Years in Family Practice Committee. This group meets regularly to focus on areas that are important for new family physicians.

A needs-assessment survey was conducted in 2009, which showed that new family physicians wanted more assistance with practice management. While practice management is taught during each Canadian family medicine training program, new family physicians believe that their need for support is greatest when they are actually in practice.

During the early part of 2011, with the assistance of the CFPC's Director of Library Services, Lynn Dunikowski, the First Five Years in Family Practice Committee collected a large number of already-available practice management resources. A new First Five Years in Family Practice website (www.cfpc.ca/FirstFiveYears) was created, with links to all of these existing resources. Province-specific resources were also collected, and were added to the website earlier this year to assist family physicians setting up practice (or acting as locum physicians) in each province.

The First Five Years in Family Practice group is a subcommittee of the Membership Advisory Committee, and serves as a resource to the Membership Advisory Committee and other areas within the CFPC, whenever the opinions of new family physicians are sought.

As the Triple C curriculum is implemented across the country, competencies in family medicine are increasingly examined as part of a continuum (ie, the competencies one must acquire during residency and how one maintains competency in practice). The First Five Years in Family Practice Committee is viewed as a key stakeholder in the College to help address this continuum, in order to better support our family physician colleagues.

Are you just starting out in practice? Please join our Facebook group, which has already become a lively forum in which new family physicians can ask questions of their colleagues and share their experiences: www.facebook.com/groups/FirstFiveYearsinPractice.Canada. You can also send an e-mail with your ideas and questions to firstfiveyearsCanada@cfpc.ca (English) or cinqpremieres@cfpc.ca (en français). We look forward to hearing from you. 🍁

Dr Kerr is Chair of First Five Years in Family Practice Committee of the CFPC. **Dr Taylor** is First5 Clinical Lead for the Royal College of General Practitioners.

References

1. Taylor CJ, Parsons J, Sparrow N, Gerada C. The first5 concept. *Br J Gen Pract* 2011;61(582):72-3.
2. Taylor CJ, Parsons J, Sparrow N, Gerada C, Hunter C, Howe A. First5@—a UK initiative relevant to the global general practice community. *Eur J Gen Pract* 2012 Jun18. Epub ahead of print.

La traduction en français de cet article se trouve à www.cfp.ca dans la table des matières du numéro de septembre 2012 à la page e527.