



Passing the baton

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Here we are in November already! The time has come to pass the baton to my successor, Dr Kathy Lawrence. Presidents come and go, but organizations stay. Our involvement is meaningful only because it is a continuation of a team effort, a relay race. Last November, I took over from Dr Sandy Buchman and my sole ambition was to be useful. I will leave it up to those I worked with to decide whether I have been. But I can attest to the work our organization's members and staff accomplished this year.

We made progress in many areas that are key to our mission. The Patient's Medical Home steering committee started its work by developing a self-assessment tool that has been tested in all provinces and some territories. The 17 departments of family medicine are working together with the College's Academic Family Medicine department on a longitudinal survey of all our graduates over 5 years, the objective of which is to track the implementation of the Triple C curriculum. The members of the Section of Researchers and the Department of Research prepared a blueprint to develop our research capacity as a discipline in all our areas of activity. We pursued our commitment to being a socially accountable organization by creating a Working Group on Aboriginal Health and by developing a code of ethics that will guide the CFPC and its representatives in their relationships with the health industries. Not to mention the arrival of our new Executive Director, Dr Francine Lemire, who, together with the entire CFPC staff, devoted herself to carrying out our strategic plan. Quite a year!

Like my predecessors, I received more than I gave. You welcomed me. I did my best to share your aspirations and needs at all the forums I was invited to. One of the highlights of the year for me was meeting family physicians from around the world at the World Organization of Family Doctors conference in Prague, Czech Republic. I was able to see how far we have come as a discipline in Canada and our role as a leader for many colleges and family medicine associations that are struggling as we did several years ago to establish

the discipline in their health and education systems. I came back convinced that we must continue to support our colleagues by becoming involved in the international arena. I also took note of the strength of young physicians and medical students here and elsewhere. Everywhere I went—chapter meetings, CFPC committee meetings, or the many national forums where I represented you—I met brilliant, enthusiastic, and committed students and residents who were determined to make a difference. I know that the new generation of physicians embraces the values of a new professionalism based on teamwork and patient-centred care. The number of medical students who are making family medicine their first career choice is growing.

That said, we are facing challenges that must be overcome. I would like to mention 2 that I believe are fundamental. First, while our organization is strong, it has grown tremendously in recent years. We must improve our agility and efficiency as an organization, and develop a better understanding of our members' needs, which vary depending on their practice settings and what stage they are at in their careers. I know that this is a priority for our Executive Director and our entire staff.

Second, while we must continue to support our members who need to acquire advanced skills to meet the needs of the communities they practice in, we must not forget that the comprehensive nature of our field of practice is what makes our discipline unique. We will remain relevant provided most of us are able to respond to the problems of a defined patient population irrespective of their age, sex, or type of problem. It is this comprehensiveness that makes us outstanding clinicians who accompany our patients throughout their lives. It is this training in comprehensive care that makes us family medicine specialists.

So here we are. The baton has been passed. All that remains for me to do is to thank you for the tremendous honour you accorded me by placing your trust in me and making me your 59th president. Thank you! 

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