

First Five Years in Family Practice

Getting started on the right foot

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Beginning a career in family medicine in Canada is exciting—and intimidating. For many new physicians, it is their first “real” job—which means transitioning from student life to professional life. Although new family physicians have prepared for this moment throughout their education and training, there are still many more challenges ahead when it comes to starting their own practices.

In 2010, the CFPC acknowledged the unique issues that new family physicians faced by establishing the First Five Years in Family Practice (FFYFP) Committee. With roots in the First5 movement based in the United Kingdom,¹ the First Five Years initiative in Canada has focused on 1) promoting physicians’ involvement with the College in their early careers, 2) encouraging peer support for the common issues faced by new family physicians, and 3) identifying and assisting with the unique needs of members early in their practices.


Since its inception, the FFYFP Committee has developed many new communications, as well as resources, on practice management and clinical practice. Many of these are province-specific, making it easy for new family doctors to find those applicable to them. Bookmark this website as the go-to site for resources and other information to help you get your career off on the right foot: www.cfpc.ca/firstfiveyears.

In the year ahead, the committee hopes to learn more about its membership. A needs-assessment survey to be conducted in the spring will focus on FFYFP initiatives, including practice management resources, mentorship, and peer learning, and other areas that have been identified as concerns by physicians during the early years

of practice. If you are a new family doctor, watch for an e-mail about the survey in the coming weeks. Your responses will provide the committee with valuable input on new project priorities and help meet the needs of new family physicians.

The committee also wants to enhance its connections with international early-career groups that are more advanced in their organized activities. As a first step, representatives plan to attend an international conference in Prague, Czech Republic, in June 2013.

In the fall, plan to attend the popular FFYFP session at Family Medicine Forum. Hosted by the FFYFP Committee, the session provides a great opportunity to network with other new family doctors and to talk about what it takes to get up and running in practice most effectively.

There are many ways to get involved with the FFYFP group. Join our Facebook group (www.facebook.com/groups/FirstFiveYearsinPractice.Canada), a lively forum in which new family physicians can ask questions of their colleagues, make new contacts, and share their experiences. The Facebook group has close to 700 members and continues to grow. You can also send us an e-mail with your ideas and questions: firstfiveyearsCanada@cfpc.ca (English) and cinqpremieres@cfpc.ca (en français). We hope to hear from you soon! 

Dr MacLean is Chair and Drs Kerr, Dawson, Hebert, Mihalchuk, Wong, and Collins are members of the First Five Years in Family Practice Committee of the CFPC.

Reference

1. Taylor CJ, Parsons J, Sparrow N, Gerada C. The First5 concept. *Br J Gen Pract* 2011;61(582):72-3.

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