



Tools for family practice

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Dear Colleagues,

We are privileged to include family physicians with varied scopes of practice among our membership. Most provide continuing comprehensive care to a defined patient population. Many have also developed areas of specific expertise and are a resource to their colleagues and to patient populations with defined needs. I want to share with you a few initiatives and some practice resources that are being launched this fall to assist you in your everyday work.

Advance care planning brochure

As part of the work currently under way in end-of-life and seniors' care, your College, in conjunction with the Advisory Committee on Family Practice, and with input from members of the palliative care and ethics committees, has produced a patient resource on advance care planning (ACP) available online (www.cfpc.ca/ACP). The document is founded on the excellent resources on the Speak Up website of the Canadian Hospice Palliative Care Association.

Every advance care plan begins with an honest and open discussion about one's wishes for the end of life and is a reflection of one's values. The relationships that we develop over time with our patients offer us a wonderful opportunity to encourage them to begin this conversation with their circle of support. We hope this resource for patients can help them take those first steps. While ACP needs to be owned by each of our patients, we as family physicians can offer accurate information, answer questions about medical interventions, and address fears about dying. The need to address ACP also applies to each of us.

Resource document on marijuana

Health Canada's *Marijuana for Medical Purposes Regulations*¹—permitting physicians to sign a medical document authorizing a patient's access to, and purchase of, a specified quantity of dried cannabis from a licensed producer—put family physicians in uncharted and challenging clinical territory. The CFPC has created a document² (www.cfpc.ca/Dried_Cannabis_Prelim_Guidance) to address a knowledge gap in a controversial practice area that lacks the usual supports. College members who produced this document worked within an extraordinary context: the authorized substance lacks the solid evidence that would make clinicians comfortable prescribing it. Many aspects remain largely unstudied; pain and addiction remain particularly challenging medical practice areas. There is intense interest by patients, little regulation, and, above all, an urgency to provide basic parameters to guide family

physicians in the safe treatment of their patients. The document provides an overview of the following:

- What we know so far about potential harms and benefits of cannabis use to treat different conditions and populations, with a focus on pain and anxiety (the most common clinical areas for which patients request dried cannabis).
- Regulations and suggested best practices to follow before authorizing or continuing a patient's access.

The document provides 15 evidence-based recommendations, as well as practice resources including messages for patients, screening tools for misuse or addiction risk, a sample treatment agreement, information about strains available from licensed producers, and dosing calculations.

The CFPC is engaging in a rigorous process to provide more formal clinical practice guidelines and continuing professional development offerings in this area, and encourages members to share feedback on this document by e-mailing healthpolicy@cfpc.ca.

Family Medicine Forum 2014

We hope to see many of you at Family Medicine Forum, November 12 to 15, 2014, in Quebec city, Que. It will be a high-quality continuing professional development meeting, a great venue, and a wonderful opportunity to connect with colleagues and friends. Follow us on Twitter @FamilyMedForum.

A stronger CFPC

The College recently launched an important change initiative called "A Stronger CFPC." The ultimate goal is to strengthen our organization in order to serve you, our valued members, better. As part of this initiative, we will be putting a new organizational design into place over the next few months. The changes we will be implementing are intended to support the achievement of our strategic objectives; improve our ability to engage and serve members; advance our use of technology; manage external relationships more effectively; promote collaboration among departments and functions; develop and support our staff; and deliver on our mandate while being fiscally responsible.

Further changes will take place in the next few months. We will be sure to keep you informed of our progress. 🍁

Acknowledgment

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References

1. Health Canada. *Marijuana for medical purposes regulations*. Ottawa, ON: Health Canada; 2014.
2. *Authorizing dried cannabis for chronic pain or anxiety: preliminary guidance from the College of Family Physicians of Canada*. Mississauga, ON: CFPC; 2014.

Cet article se trouve aussi en français à la page 955.