



Sixty years later

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Dear Colleagues,

As 2014 draws to a close, I want to reflect on the past 60 years of our history and leave you with a few thoughts about our potential future. The founders of the CFPC were concerned that GPs were not prepared well enough to meet patients' needs: many worked in isolation, and opportunities for continuing professional development were few.

1. *Who said family practice was becoming the "wastebasket of Canadian medicine"?* (Find the answer below.)

In writings that preceded the creation of our College, Dr Victor Johnston, our first Executive Director, detailed the need to encourage GPs to be active in hospital care, to create proper postgraduate training for general practice, and to enhance research in general practice.¹ Fast forward to today: family medicine is much better defined as a discipline, and we have robust standards of training, with postgraduate residency training in each of Canada's 17 medical schools. Continuing professional development opportunities abound. Solid research in family medicine and community care is taking place, even though we all realize that it needs to be better supported. Certification by either the CFPC for family medicine or by the Royal College for other specialties is the accepted standard to obtain an unrestricted licence to practise in Canada.

Of interest, in the first 10 months of 2014, 1399 candidates achieved their CCFP designation: 1229 by examination, 56 through the alternate route to Certification, and 114 by way of recognition of certification outside Canada in an approved jurisdiction (48 from the United States, 3 from Australia, 8 from Ireland, and 55 from the United Kingdom). Results of the fall examination are pending as I write this. The CCFP examination was the first summative assessment to test competencies beyond the medical expert role. With 3 separate structured oral components to assess problem solving and doctor-patient communication, the CCFP examination included the very first objective structured clinical examinations. The CFPC was the first professional medical organization in Canada to clearly link maintenance of Certification to a commitment to lifelong learning.

2. *When was the first Certification Examination in Family Medicine held?*

Although we have come a long way, much remains to be done to build upon the milestones achieved. When I was preparing for my final interview for the CFPC Chief

Executive Officer position, I took the liberty of interviewing 13 individuals, both CFPC staff and members, regarding the challenges and opportunities facing our profession. The resounding message arising out of those interviews was the need for ongoing validation of our discipline. So, what must we pay attention to as we think about the future?

We need to:

- Adapt to new health care demands from an aging population, work collaboratively and appropriately with other health care providers, and meaningfully engage our patients in making informed decisions about their care.
- Accept and support that within our generalist discipline we can acquire enhanced skills in domains integral to family medicine, and be an incredible resource to our colleagues and community.
- Keep encouraging and enhancing family medicine research and find the funds to both do the work and publish the outcomes.
- Commit, individually and collectively, to making a positive mark on the key elements of a high-performing, quality health care system, and be accountable to our individual patients and the populations we serve.²

I strongly believe that the Patient's Medical Home concept, if appropriately supported by a robust infrastructure, offers a wonderful opportunity to achieve these objectives, particularly if family medicine learners have educational experiences where the model is supported and practised.

As part of our 60th anniversary, we launched an initiative to retrace the history of our discipline. This was led by Dr Paul Rainsberry (past Associate Executive Director of Academic Family Medicine, and this year's recipient of the Ian McWhinney Teacher of the Year award) and an incredible and engaged team in Communications. I encourage you to browse this remarkable work at www.familymedicineheritage.ca.

3. *Who was the College's first female national President?*

As the year comes to a close, from all of us at the CFPC, best wishes for the holiday season and for 2015. 🌟

Acknowledgment

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References

1. Johnston VW. The accreditation of general practitioners. *Can Med Assoc J* 1952;67:452-5.
2. Rainsberry P. *Family medicine. The Canadian heritage*. Mississauga, ON: College of Family Physicians of Canada; 2014.

(Answers: 1. Irwin Bean, President 1962-1963; 2. July 1969; 3. Joan Bain, President 1987-1988.)

Cet article se trouve aussi en français à la page 1163.