

The CFPC welcomes its 2017–2018 President, Dr Guillaume Charbonneau



Dr Guillaume Charbonneau, a family physician from Maniwaki, Que, was installed as the 64th President of the College of Family Physicians of Canada (CFPC) on November 11, 2017, at the CFPC's annual Family Medicine Forum.

Long before arriving at his current position, Dr Charbonneau experienced the same vocational indecision as millions of other young people. "I was passionate about history, philosophy, politics, astrophysics," he says. "I wanted to know everything and do everything!" After cégep Dr Charbonneau embarked on a cycling trip through Europe in search of new horizons and full of the desire to experience different cultures. By the time he returned home he had decided to pursue his passion for studying the sciences and helping others. In 1999 Dr Charbonneau started medical school at the University of Montreal in Quebec.

When the time came to select a specialty Dr Charbonneau did not hesitate in choosing family medicine. "It was the only specialty that would allow me to pursue all my interests and practise medicine in a multifaceted way."

During his time at the University of Montreal Dr Charbonneau was elected President of the Association des étudiantes et étudiants en médecine in 2001 and he became President of the Fédération médicale étudiante du Québec 2 years later. During his residency he chaired the Family Medicine Academic Affairs Committee and became President of the Fédération des médecins résidents du Québec.

In 2006 Dr Charbonneau and his wife, Dr Véronique Duplessis, also a family physician, accepted positions at the Centre de santé et de services sociaux de la Vallée-de-la-Gatineau in Maniwaki. When they arrived, the area had a chronic physician shortage, with nearly half of the population lacking a family doctor. After serving as President of the Quebec College of Family Physicians from 2008 to 2010, Dr Charbonneau decided to put his leadership skills to use at the local level. He founded

a family medicine group in Maniwaki in 2011 to provide a supportive working environment and encourage doctors to put down roots in the area. It was not easy, he says. In addition to getting everyone on board with an electronic medical record system, he had to convince 23 physicians working in 7 clinics to learn to work as a team and welcome nurses, social workers, a kinesiologist, and a pharmacist into their practices.


"The project has been challenging, but the region's hospital has not experienced physician shortages for more than 5 years," Dr Charbonneau says. "Now we are one of the regions in Quebec where the office for patients without family doctors is virtually empty."

More than 10 years after arriving in Maniwaki, Dr Charbonneau and his wife still work there and are now busy raising their 2 children, ages 5 and 7.

In recognition of his leadership and earlier efforts to have family medicine acknowledged as a specialty, the CFPC presented Dr Charbonneau with the 2011 Jean-Pierre Despins Award, which honours a CFPC member identified as an outstanding advocate and public spokesperson for family medicine, family physicians, and their patients.

In 2012 Dr Charbonneau was elected to the CFPC's Board of Directors and later served as Secretary-Treasurer and President-Elect.

As President of the CFPC, Dr Charbonneau hopes to achieve several key goals. He wants to help enhance access to health care in Canada to support better health outcomes for patients. Recognizing that family medicine is a complex specialty, Dr Charbonneau will work to help others understand those complexities and that family medicine must be recognized fairly for its value. Finally, he believes that the Patient's Medical Home model of care is essential to offering the best care that family medicine can provide and that governments should invest more to support it.

"Family medicine is an extraordinary specialty. I encourage members to engage in our profession, get involved in their communities, and of course provide excellent services to their patients. We must also work together to improve our health care system. I look forward to meeting CFPC members in the year ahead and working with them to enhance our health system." 

Cet article se trouve aussi en français à la page 974.