

The Besroure Centre

Building a sustainable future



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The CFPC would like to contribute to improving global health. Through the Foundation for Advancing Family Medicine and the Besroure Centre, the CFPC is working to improve access to high-quality primary care for all. But why should we do this? What do we have to contribute to the cause? How do these efforts help us here in Canada?

When I began my medical studies, I wanted to work in “humanitarian aid.” During my first year of medical school, I completed a rotation in Peru and learned a lot from the experience. The first thing I came to understand was that aid is not unidirectional. In fact, the Peruvians I met probably helped me more than I did them. I also learned the truth of the old adage that says “Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime.” The other thing I learned was that developing nations are in great need of generalists.

On a more personal level, during this trip I realized that I did not need to travel to the other side of the world to help vulnerable and underserved communities. This new understanding motivated me to become more involved locally, a realization that eventually brought me to Maniwaki, Que, and led to the position of President of the CFPC.

Many countries with deficient health care systems are using vertical models that focus on isolated health problems. This approach creates gaps in health care because individual patients rarely experience only one health problem at a time; this model does not allow for continuity of care or comprehensive care. Studies have shown that health care systems with well-established primary care achieve better results in terms of health, equity, and cost-effectiveness.^{1,2}

The CFPC created the Global Health Committee several years ago because global health is an area of interest for a considerable number of College members. In 2015, the College's activities within this domain grew substantially with the official launch of the Besroure Centre.

Dr Besroure, a Tunisian-born family physician from Montreal, Que, has a vision: create a non-profit organization, similar to the World Economic Forum, for family medicine to improve the health of populations living in developing countries by increasing their access to high-quality primary care. This vision is shared by the CFPC and the Foundation for Advancing Family Medicine.

The 2018 Declaration on Primary Health Care states that access to primary care is one of the most powerful tools available for building a sustainable future.³ It is, therefore, not

surprising that several organizations have agreed to partner with the Besroure Centre (all departments of family medicine across Canada, Health Canada, Global Affairs Canada, the World Health Organization, World Bank, the World Organization of Family Doctors, Conférence Internationale des Doyens et des Facultés de Médecine d'Expression Française, etc). The Besroure Centre's activities are centred on the CFPC's expertise: education, research, and quality improvement. Relationships have already been formed with more than 20 countries, establishing personal and productive contacts through the annual Besroure Global Health Forum. We do not wish to practise family medicine in these countries, but we support them in developing their academic expertise so they can establish local services themselves. The founders of the CFPC had a similar vision and led Canada to become a global leader in family medicine.

Improving the health of all people is important, but for the project to be relevant to CFPC members it must have local outcomes. Canadian family medicine is certainly progressing as a result of these international partnerships. Our departments of family medicine and researchers see opportunities in the project and have benefited from them.

The CFPC conducted a study on the feasibility of fundraising for the Besroure Centre. This initiative found that our members believed that the CFPC was the best organization to oversee the project and that, in turn, the project must assist us in supporting vulnerable populations in Canada, including Indigenous peoples. Meaningful work is currently being done to achieve this objective.

The Besroure Centre has launched but its survival is not assured. For this project to succeed, the CFPC needs more of its most precious resource: membership involvement. One way you can get involved is by participating in Besroure Centre activities. But we must also secure viable funding for the project. Each donation, regardless of how much is given, is important to reaching this goal, and members will be asked to donate. As more of us contribute, the easier it will be to demonstrate the project's value and convince larger donors to support the cause. I hope that we can count on you, and I wish the Besroure Centre the greatest success. 🌱

References

1. Starfield B, Shi L, Macinko J. Contribution of primary care to health systems and health. *Milbank Q* 2005;88(3):457-502.
2. Starfield B. Primary care: an increasingly important contributor to effectiveness, equity, and efficiency of health services. *SESPAS report 2012. Gac Sanit* 2012;26 (Suppl 1):20-6. Epub 2012 Jan 21.
3. *Declaration on primary health care. Global Conference on Primary Health Care, Astana, Kazakhstan, 25-26 October 2018. Geneva, Switz: World Health Organization; 2018.*

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