

The CFPC welcomes its 2018-2019 President, Dr Paul Sawchuk



Dr Paul Sawchuk was installed as the 65th President of the College of Family Physicians of Canada (CFPC) on November 16, 2018, at Family Medicine Forum in Toronto, Ont.

Growing up in Winnipeg, Man, Dr Sawchuk saw his parents as role models; his mother was a nurse and his father was a teacher, and both

were actively involved in their community. Dr Sawchuk wished to find a path that would similarly allow him to contribute to society, and during medical school at the University of Manitoba in Winnipeg he learned how a career in family medicine would help him achieve his goal.

"I specialized in family medicine because I wanted to work in an Indigenous community, and in Canada it is primarily family doctors who live and work in those communities," he says. "Family medicine training provided me with the broad skills (obstetrics, pediatrics, emergency medicine, mental health) that I needed to work in that environment."

After completing his residency in 1994 Dr Sawchuk and his wife, Margaret Rauliuk, who is a nurse practitioner, moved to Bella Bella, BC. This provided the opportunity to work directly with the Heiltsuk First Nation and take on the role of Medical Director of the community's small hospital. The medical staff was composed mostly of senior physicians working as locums, and as a young physician Dr Sawchuk drew on these colleagues for support and wisdom.

Dr Sawchuk had planned on working in Bella Bella for just 12 months but ended up staying for 6 years. His admiration for how much the Heiltsuk revere family inspired him to return to Manitoba. As a new father he wished to raise his children where he could foster connections with their grandparents, cousins, aunts, and uncles.

After moving back to Winnipeg in 2000 Dr Sawchuk continued to practise comprehensive care and became Medical Director of Mount Carmel Clinic. In 2006 he became Site Medical Leader for ACCESS River East, a multidisciplinary primary care clinic that includes a

hospital-to-home program that helps patients with complex needs receive care at home. From 2007 to 2013 Dr Sawchuk served as Chief Medical Officer at Concordia Hospital, and he continues to work as an attending physician there. He also serves as Co-Site Medical Lead at another local clinic and is Medical Director of 2 personal care homes.

Advocating for and providing home care have been important parts of Dr Sawchuk's practice. "Long-term care and home care have not received the attention they deserve considering the important roles they play in many people's lives," he says. "There continues to be ample opportunity for family doctors to participate in these areas, and the work is very rewarding and important."

As an educator Dr Sawchuk shares his views on the value of comprehensive care with medical students and family medicine residents, and in turn he is inspired by their view of family medicine as a global calling. He was appointed Assistant Professor in the Department of Family Medicine at the University of Manitoba in 2013.

With a passion for lifelong learning, Dr Sawchuk returned to school in 2006 when he entered a master of business administration program at the University of Manitoba. At the time he was working in Winnipeg's inner city and wanted to learn more about nonmedical aspects of the social determinants of health, such as job creation and housing.

In addition to his leadership roles in numerous clinical settings, Dr Sawchuk has been actively involved with the CFPC throughout his career. He became a member of the CFPC Board of Directors in 2012, served as President of the Manitoba College of Family Physicians from 2013 to 2014, and has participated in numerous CFPC committees, including the Finance and Audit Committee and the Patient's Medical Home Steering Committee.

During his term as CFPC President Dr Sawchuk looks forward to emphasizing the value of family physicians to society. "Although that is a simple message, I think it is not emphasized enough within our profession, within our institutions, or to our politicians. I expect to be a strong advocate for family physicians and family medicine research. We need more family medicine research to help illustrate exactly how our commitment to our patients and to our communities makes a difference." 🌿