

Looking back, looking forward

Family medicine in the 2020s



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As I sat down to write my last President's Message to you, I wanted to look back and honour Dr Francine Lemire's many achievements as Executive Director and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the CFPC and the Foundation for Advancing Family Medicine (FAFM), and to look to the future, to imagine the person we need as our CEO for the 2020s.

I remember Francine using the image of paddlers in a canoe in one of her first presentations to CFPC leaders. Francine described how the paddlers needed to see the path through the turbulence far down the river while remaining alert to immediate hazards in front of the bow. To successfully navigate the river, the paddling team needs excellent communication, responsiveness, and adaptability, as well as a clear vision of the big picture and the goal. Throughout her tenure as CEO, Francine applied all those skills and qualities. Her vision of the worth and still-untapped potential of family medicine as the foundation of the health care system guided the Outcomes of Training project, which will transform family medicine education; her vision also informed the evolution of the Patient's Medical Home model, the modernization of the examinations, and the creation of continuing education resources tailored to community family doctors' needs. Her belief in the strength of the CFPC led to governance reviews, the renewal of the FAFM, and, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, new possibilities for the structure of work for College staff. As the unified voice of family medicine, the CFPC is developing a marketing strategy that defines a single brand, focuses on member needs, promotes the importance of Certification, and guides both national and Chapter communications and advocacy.

Francine also embraced the imperative to address systemic racism. She supported the Indigenous Health Committee in developing and implementing the CanMEDS–Family Medicine Indigenous Health Supplement and engaged racialized leadership to lead change across the organization. We have been fortunate to have Francine's steady steering throughout the past 8 years—her eyes on the approaching rapids, her strong senior team alongside her, immediately adapting their responses to crises.

How can we build on this legacy? I view the CFPC as family and as my professional home. Like all families, we evolve, we work through conflict, and, ultimately, we transform and grow stronger together.

My other family—the Cathy Cervin–David Gass family—evolves and grows. If all continues to go well, my newest granddaughter will be born in 2022 into a very different world than the one her great-great-grandfather Dr Charles Gass knew. During my installation, I pointed to the first medallion on the presidential collar to show my grandchildren Charles Gass's name. As a Nova Scotia family physician and a progressive leader and visionary in his time, he was a founding member of the College, the third President, and a white male leader among white male leaders. Today the Cervin-Gass family includes Indigenous people, nonbinary or genderqueer people, people with developmental and other neurologic disabilities, and people who embrace multiple complex relationships as stepparents, adoptive parents, and grandparents.

What can we hope and imagine for the babies who will be born in 2022? According to the *Harvard Business Review*, "more than 12% of U.S. millennials identify as transgender or gender non-conforming, and a majority believe that gender is a spectrum Gen Z's views ... are even more advanced. In the U.S., 56% know someone who uses a gender neutral pronoun and 59% believe forms should include options other than 'man' and 'woman.'"¹

Mary Simon, Canada's first Indigenous Governor General, said in her installation speech in July that "our society must recognize together our moments of regret, alongside those that give us pride, because it creates space for healing, acceptance and the rebuilding of trust."²

Embracing and championing reconciliation and gender diversity are just 2 of the challenges facing the next CEO. What kind of person do we need to lead and support our increasingly diverse members, leaders, and staff? To build on family medicine's and the CFPC's strengths, so that everyone in Canada has access to high-quality comprehensive and continuous primary care close to home? To realize the promise of technology, artificial intelligence, and virtual care? To celebrate and embrace Indigenous worldviews and ways of knowing to improve care for all?

I am optimistic as we embark on the search. Here is a link to a short confidential survey by Boyden* to provide your thoughts on the next CEO: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/LK8CPKX>.

References

1. Kenney L. Companies can't ignore shifting gender norms. *Harvard Bus Rev* 2020 Apr 8.
2. Richardson L. "Our climate allows our society to be possible": Governor General Mary Simon talks reconciliation, environment at installation. *APT National News* 2021 Jul 26.

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*Boyden is the executive search firm engaged by the CFPC.

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