



Building a better future for family physicians

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Dear Colleagues,

This second pandemic year has been challenging for everyone, especially for front-line health care workers and family physicians. Finding our place in the vaccination rollout, resuming in-person care, and integrating virtual care in the flow and organization of our practices while ensuring the safety of ourselves and others has been preoccupying, to say the least. As the voice of family physicians in Canada, your College thanks you for your dedication and resilience in these difficult times.

Two factors substantially contribute to burnout in any profession: lack of control of professional and personal demands on our time and energy; and lack of respect from supervisors. In the current context, it is unfortunate that the former affected so many of us. Some elements of the pandemic could not be foreseen and others would have benefited from anticipatory planning, funding, and involvement of front-line workers. However, what is completely unacceptable is public criticism of nurses and family physicians by some provincially elected leaders, especially at a time when many are struggling.

This message is for our politicians: respect family physicians and treat them fairly; fund and design a system that supports them; and involve them in health system planning discussions. As we shape the new normal, let us commit to giving every Canadian the opportunity to have a relationship with a family physician and primary care team, because having a family doctor means better care. A family physician with Certification in Family Medicine (CCFP) is a recognized standard in the specialty of family medicine. Let us commit to investing in models of care that are population based, community located, team led, and less focused on fee-for-service payments. Such models must provide

the conditions necessary so that future health care providers can be well trained, can develop a robust professional identity in family medicine, and can have a sense of purpose for community care.

The Patient's Medical Home is accepted in many parts of the country. High-functioning Patient's Medical Homes have demonstrated better patient and provider experiences and higher satisfaction, fewer visits to the emergency department, fewer readmissions, and better adherence to prevention.^{1,2} Countries with robust primary care systems that feature family doctors have better population outcomes.^{3,4} The evidence for this is in. Canadians continue to value the trusted relationship they have with their family physicians. So, let us get started in "building back better." We cannot be silent—connect with your provincially or territorially elected representatives to convey these messages.

I sincerely hope that you will have the opportunity to take time off over the holidays to recharge and connect with family and friends. Wishing you the very best for the holidays and 2022, on behalf of all of us at the CFPC. 🍁

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References

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