



Championing the underdogs

Communities have sought beacons of light in dark times during the COVID-19 pandemic. Dr Lawrence Loh shone as the Medical Officer of Health for the Region of Peel in Ontario over the past 2.5 years; he will now bring his luminous leadership style to the role of Executive Director and Chief Executive Officer of the CFPC and the Foundation for Advancing Family Medicine (FAFM) as of September 26, 2022.

Dr Loh received national recognition during the pandemic for his ability to work collaboratively and make tough decisions. His leadership helped save lives in a populous, diverse community that faced high rates of transmission and chronic underinvestment in social and health needs. Always one to root for the underdog, whether in sports or in his professional life, Dr Loh sees his new role with the College as an extension of that approach.

Family medicine, like public health, is made up of unsung heroes who perform everyday miracles in our communities that keep Canadians healthier for longer. I am excited to take on this role and work with everyone to tackle the unprecedented challenges facing family medicine today.

After attending medical school at Western University in London, Ont, Dr Loh completed a residency in public health and preventive medicine at the University of Toronto, family medicine training at St Michael's Hospital, and a master's degree in public health from Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, MD. He then held progressively more senior leadership roles at 3 levels of government, including positions with the Public Health Agency of Canada, the Fraser Health Authority in British Columbia, Public Health Ontario, and Peel Public Health.

Earlier in his career Dr Loh worked as a family doctor in Brampton, Ont, and over a decade he continued to practise family medicine alongside his work in public health in both Ontario and British Columbia. He has received awards for research and teaching related to his continuing faculty appointments with the University of Toronto and with Queen's University in Kingston, Ont.

Dr Loh has been actively involved with the CFPC since he completed his family medicine residency in 2008. He has served as an examiner and assistant coordinator for the CFPC's simulated office oral examinations,

and he has published and peer reviewed *Canadian Family Physician* articles since 2010. Dr Loh has also collaborated with the Besroure Centre for Global Family Medicine in presentations and roundtable discussions at Family Medicine Forum and elsewhere.

As the CFPC's 6th Executive Director and Chief Executive Officer, Dr Loh succeeds Dr Francine Lemire. Supported by a fabulous team, Dr Lemire has led the College since January 2013 through key education initiatives, such as implementing the Triple C curriculum for family medicine training in Canada, recognizing family doctors with enhanced skills, and developing the Outcomes of Training project. She helped steer the CFPC's advocacy work, advance the Patient's Medical Home vision, and contribute to global family medicine efforts. She has supported CFPC work to address the social determinants of health and challenge systemic racism in family medicine. Following full governance reviews of the CFPC and the FAFM, both organizations evolved to align with best practices. During the pandemic Dr Lemire led the CFPC in adapting to new realities while remaining focused on members' needs.

In taking the torch from Dr Lemire, Dr Loh says his first priorities are to listen to CFPC members and ensure that the needs they have identified are addressed.

We know we must speak with a louder voice to highlight the need for additional practice supports. We need to talk about remuneration and how it hasn't kept pace for decades. We must figure out ways to better structure family practices so that family doctors are supported and can take care of themselves as they take care of patients.

As an extrovert, Dr Loh enjoys convening groups and meeting people. Whether chatting with fellow runners during a marathon, participating in musical activities, or reconnecting with friends, he is always eager to listen and learn. He invites members to share their ideas about how the CFPC can better support them at executive@cfpc.ca.

I look forward to amplifying our members' voices through advocacy and concrete actions. Together, we can build on the strong primary care tradition that has been the backbone of Canada's health care system and ensure that our members can thrive in today's practice environment.



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