2009 Canada’s Family Physicians of the Year

BACKGROUND

Recognizing Excellence

Since 1972, The College of Family Physicians of Canada (CFPC) has honoured family physician members who exemplify the guiding principles of family medicine. This year’s outstanding Family Physicians of the Year - one from each Canadian province - are recognized for excellence in family medicine by providing exceptional personal care to their patients, sharing their knowledge and insights with their colleagues and with physicians in training, and giving back to their communities.

The 2009 Family Physicians of the Year demonstrate the rich diversity of family medicine. They are teachers, researchers and clinicians. They care for patients in private offices and clinics, nursing homes and hospitals, and community health centres. They work in big cities and small rural communities. They provide care for new born infants, elderly patients and all age groups in between.

The national award recipients are nominated by their peers, other health care colleagues, community leaders and patients, and provincial Chapters of the CFPC. All applications are reviewed by the CFPC’s Honours & Awards Committee and Research and Education Foundation.

2009 Recipients

Dr. Paul Bonisteel MD, CCFP, FCFP
Newfoundland & Labrador

“If you’re bored by seeing routine, uninteresting, unchallenging cases then you’re not practising family medicine. I am honoured to be counted among the previous award recipients for whom I have the greatest respect as family physicians.”

A physician who ‘epitomizes the principles of family medicine,’ Dr. Paul Bonisteel is recognized as an incredible advocate for both the profession and his patients.

Born in Toronto, Ontario, Paul graduated from the University of Ottawa in 1983 and moved to Newfoundland and Labrador in 1985 after obtaining his Certification in family medicine. He now practices at the New Harbour Medical Clinic where he divides his time between Newhook Community Health Centre and Carbonear General Hospital.

From 1986 to 1991, Paul was Assistant Professor of Family Medicine at Memorial University and later the Acting Chair of Continuing Medical Education for the university. During the 50th anniversary celebrations of The College of Family Physicians of Canada in 2004, Paul chaired the Annual Scientific Assembly. Since 2005, he has been a clinical preceptor with Memorial University, providing guidance to medical students as well as family practice residents.

Paul’s implicit honesty and strong vision places him at the forefront of the political landscape. From 2000-2002, he sat on the CFPC’s National Board of Directors, during which time he was a member of the Newfoundland and Labrador Chapter’s Executive, including a term as President of the Chapter from 2001-2002.

Known to be a devoted family man, Paul is married to Mary Harris, with whom he shares three lovely children, Simon, Erin, and Isaac. An avid banjo-player, Paul loves 17th Century Newfoundland and Labrador history. His hobbies include soccer and hockey as well as hiking and camping.
Dr. Randy MacKinnon MD, CCFP, FCFP  

Prince Edward Island

"I am humbled to have been chosen to receive this prestigious award. This is the highest honour that I could have hoped to achieve as a practicing family physician."

A native of Prince Edward Island, Dr. Randy MacKinnon oversees one of the largest practices in the region, yet manages it with incomparable efficiency. His patients boast about seeing him quickly, often the same day. Yet Randy has a reputation for being comprehensive, compassionate and conscientious.

After graduating from Dalhousie University, Randy obtained his Certification from the CFPC in 1995 and started practicing in Stratford, PEI, shortly thereafter. He was awarded his Fellowship in 2008.

From 2001 to 2003, Randy was President of the PEI Chapter and since 2004, a Board member of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of PEI. Randy is also a Preceptor for Dalhousie’s Department of Family Medicine undergraduate education and postgraduate training programs. Many of Randy’s students credit him with shaping their own careers. His ability to balance the pressures of family practice while dedicating time to his family is noteworthy.

Randy’s typical day begins with 6AM rounds at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and although his dedication to his patients extends well beyond his office practice, he is usually home to greet his children when they return from school. Known as the ‘front-door physician,’ Randy encourages his patients to always call or visit before heading off to Emergency.

The PEI champ for the CFPC’s Doctors Promoting Active Living initiative, Randy is involved in all kinds of sports, more participating than watching. He is married to Paulette and they have two children, Emily and Andrew. An outdoor enthusiast, Randy’s hobbies include camping, boating, skiing and biking.

Dr. Lawrence MacNeil MD, MCFP  

Nova Scotia

“As a rural family physician it is critical to address sustainability of health care services. By doing so you will improve your patients’ health and happiness as well as your own.”

Arichat, Nova Scotia, is an island with an aging population and only one doctor: Dr. Lawrence MacNeil. Dr. MacNeil - or Laurie as he is known to many of his patients - has singlehandedly cared for more than 5000 islanders for over 25 years! He is the jewel that most rural communities long for.

Since graduating from Dalhousie University in 1982, Laurie has been an invaluable asset to the practice of family medicine. When doctor shortages threatened to shut down acute care at Saint Anne’s Community and Nursing Care Centre, forcing people to drive an hour to the next hospital, Laurie took call for emergency services 24/7. He spearheaded the hospital’s evolution from an inpatient facility to a seniors’ and emergency health centre with ambulatory services, including the diabetic clinic he manages. This is now viewed as a model of service for rural communities in Canada.

Laurie works long hours but goes out of his way to see patients at home, often visiting to deliver bad news or to provide care under difficult circumstances. He excels in collaborative care and is described as “a dream” to work with. He is a coroner for his region and as a clinical preceptor with Dalhousie University, is actively recruiting family physicians to his region.

Over the years, Laurie has contributed to community activities involving the Arichat Yacht Club, Boy Scouts Movement as well as hockey and baseball. He is married to Barbara with whom he delivers a marriage preparation program at his local church.
“From the time I watched my father practice medicine, I knew I wanted to be a family doctor. After reflecting on 36 years of practicing in a variety of settings with the unconditional support of my family, I am convinced that working in a setting defined by life-long patient relationships provides the most effective and rewarding experience for both families and physicians.”

Dr. John Keddy is a strong medical and community leader from Fredericton, New Brunswick. ‘Whether it be teaching a young medical student, resident or other physician learner, John is able to provide the kind of role model that leaves a mark forever’ says his colleague.

One of John’s greatest achievements is his ability to inspire. He is a dedicated teacher and mentor. His students and residents revel in his enthusiasm to listen, to share his knowledge, and to encourage their best achievements.

John completed his medical degree at Dalhousie University and has devoted the past 36 years to the people of Fredericton. During this time he has touched the lives of his patients through his clinical skills in hospital care, obstetrics, emergency medicine, care of the elderly and sports medicine. His affiliation with Dr. Everett Chalmers Hospital included a term as Chair of the Family Practice Department. His natural leadership also opened other doors at Pine Grove Nursing Home and the Fredericton Sports Medicine Clinic. John has been Medical Director of the Veteran’s Health Unit for over 30 years.

John was twice President of the Fredericton Medical Clinic and also served as President of the New Brunswick College of Family Physicians in 1990, following which he was awarded his Fellowship with the CFPC in 1995.

John and his wife Margaret have two grown children. He enjoys squash, tennis and skiing, and is an accomplished musician on the piano. Most recently he has been enjoying his new role as a grandfather.

Jean Maziade, MD CCFM FCMF

“For me, family medicine goes way beyond the treatment of patients; first and foremost, it is the opportunity to establish a special relationship with each person in order to support them in every aspect of their health. It is also teaching and sharing the joy of practicing a wonderful profession to students and residents in family medicine.”

From St-Augustin de Desmaures, Quebec, Dr. Jean Maziade has been practicing family medicine for almost 25 years. He obtained his medical degree from Université Laval and was awarded Certification with the CFPC in 1986. Jean completed his Masters in Experimental Medicine in 1992 and became a Fellow of the College in 1997.

Jean is affiliated with Laval University and the Family Medicine unit of the Centre de santé et de services sociaux de la Vieille-Capitale where he not only serves as Chief of Family Medicine but also teaches and mentors medical students. Having recently implemented the “Plan Maziade” for students, he works tirelessly to improve training to benefit the next generation of family doctors. Jean has been in charge of Certification exams at Laval since 2006.

Jean is equally as passionate about public health, including the battle against influenza virus. As a member of the Ministry of Health and Social Services’ Groupe provinciale de surveillance et de vigie de l’influenza, he has conducted and published an impressive amount of research. His publications demonstrate a wide range of professional expertise, from breast cancer to hypertension.

It is his passion that has garnered Jean the respect of his colleagues, leading to various awards, including three Prix de reconnaissance en enseignement (supervision) en médecine familiale from the CLSC-CHSLD Haute-Ville-Des-Rivières and the CCSS de la Vieille-Capitale in recent years.
This enthusiasm also infiltrates his community activities where Jean coaches children’s soccer teams in his spare time. He enjoys playing golf and badminton, and dabbles in carpentry, plumbing and electrical work. Jean is married to Francine Vézina, also a physician, and they have a son, Alexandre.

Dr. Dona Rae Bowers MD, CCFP, FCFP

“How honoured and humbled I feel to be the recipient of the Family Physician of the Year Award. It continues to be a privilege to be invited to share in the life journey of our clients. An equal privilege is to share the passion and commitment of my colleagues who exemplify initiative and creativity to ensure the most competent primary care is provided to our inner city clients. The days are immensely rewarding and never boring.”

The visionary leadership of Dr. Dona Rae Bowers from Ottawa, Ontario has been fundamental to her success. Dedicated to an inner-city patient population in her role as Director of Health Services at Somerset West Community Health Centre, Dona is a champion of immigration health issues and HIV/AIDS. She has opened doors to new and enhanced health care for her patients as a result of her ‘creativity, bravery, persistence and inspiration’.

Dona completed her medical degree at McMaster University in 1984. She received her certification with the College in 1986 and her Fellowship in 1997. Throughout her career she has supported the development of inter-professional health care teams as a model to best meet the needs of her patients.

Together with her team, Dona delivers community-based programs: Southeast Asian Outreach Health Services, HIV Supportive Care, Newcomer Health Clinic and Nutrition for a Healthy Pregnancy to name a few. She also spearheaded a groundbreaking project to improve access to primary care for disadvantaged residents.

Dona is an Assistant Professor with the Department of Family Medicine at the University of Ottawa. She founded the OMA Section of Community Health Centre Physicians and has delivered numerous presentations on CHC’s as well as collaborative practice. She still finds time to provide full obstetrical care for her own patients as well as those of her referring colleagues.

Dr. Darcy Johnson MD, CCFP, FCFP

“I would like to thank the CFPC for this prestigious award, recognizing over 25 years of my ongoing advocacy for family physicians and comprehensive patient care. I believe that the value we as family physicians contribute to society relates to the comprehensiveness of the care we provide for our patients.”

“It’s a lucky person who can say they are a patient of Darcy Johnson’s” - a summation provided by the Chief Medical Officer at Concordia Hospital where Dr. Johnson has practiced for over 25 years. Since starting in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Darcy has shown his commitment to his patients - whether providing office, hospital or home care - and to his colleagues - in negotiating optimal agreements for them at both the provincial and national levels.

Having graduated from the University of Manitoba, Darcy was awarded Certification in Family Medicine in 1983 and became a Fellow of the CFPC in 2004. In addition to practice in North East Winnipeg, Darcy has provided medical care at Stony Mountain Penitentiary since 1990.

Darcy is highly regarded for his leadership in continuing professional development as well as supporting system change for family doctors. Within the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority, he has served as a Medical Leader, participating in Primary Care Renewal which includes the North East Primary Care Project, Physician Integrated Network Initiative and Primary Care Advisory Committee.
Darcy was a Member of the Manitoba College of Family Physicians Executive from 1999-2005, serving as President from 2003-2004. He is also a Member of the Manitoba Medical Association Board and served as its President from 2007-2008.

Darcy always has a bit of home with him since his wife, Shirley, works as a family practice nurse in his office. Darcy and Shirley have two children: Eric who just finished grade 9 and Sheryl who attends the University of Toronto.

Dr. Keith Ogle MD, CCFP, FCFP  
Saskatchewan

“Being selected for this award is both a surprise and an incredible honour. I am blessed to work in one of the most satisfying disciplines on the planet, alongside truly awesome, caring and competent colleagues - I can think of dozens of them here in my own community who are more deserving of recognition.”

Known to fight for the concerns of family physicians and their patients, Dr. Keith Ogle is respected as a skilled clinician who actively pursues the latest developments in medicine. Described by his patients as kind, compassionate and humorous, he has been instrumental in optimizing community health by coordinating care to underserviced areas in urban Regina, promoting medical education in rural Saskatchewan, and supporting care to northern communities.

After obtaining his medical degree from the University of Saskatchewan, Keith was awarded Certification in Family Medicine in 1994 and Fellowship in 2007. His practice is at West Winds Primary Health Centre in Saskatoon and he is the Chair of the Department of Family Medicine at the University of Saskatchewan. From May 2007 to May 2009, Keith was also Chair of the National Association of Chairs of Family Medicine.

Having a very keen interest in medical ethics, Keith has developed a reputation as the residing ‘Ethicist-on-call’. He pursues this passion as a consultant in clinical ethics for the Saskatoon Health Region and as a bio-medical ethicist at the College of Medicine, University of Saskatchewan. Keith has numerous academic papers to his name and offers his expertise to students and colleagues in diverse disciplines by accepting frequent speaking engagements.

Keith has several different interests in life which he enjoyed long before pursuing a career in medicine. He is a graphic artist, canoe-builder, musician, carpenter and full-time wilderness homesteader. Keith is married to Tessa Laubscher, a family physician herself, and has an additional place in his heart for his daughter Alisson.
Dr. George Gish MD, CCFP, FCFP

Alberta

“I have been humbled by the kindness of my patients and local community over receiving this award. Their response has reaffirmed what I try to relate to my students - that there is tremendous value in being able to see the big picture and a good steward for the health of your community. Family medicine has been an exceptionally rewarding experience and I continue to celebrate daily my career choice.”

Dr. George Gish arrived in Claresholm in 1980 and has since made an indelible difference to his community. His patients describe him as a family physician who is willing to go “the extra mile” in any situation and his peers as a dedicated physician who ‘provides exceptional care, promotes family practice through his relationships, and has a firm commitment to teaching.’

A graduate from the University of Calgary, George became a Certificant of the CFPC in 1979 and a Fellow in 2003. He also obtained special recognition in anesthesia, a service he has provided to community surgeons ever since. In addition to a busy family practice, George contributes to emergency room coverage at Claresholm General Hospital, care at Willow Creek Auxiliary Hospital and Nursing Home, and is very involved with local mental health, alcohol, drug and addiction programs.

George is highly recognized for his commitment to rural medicine. Since 2006, he has been the Chair of the Calgary Rural Primary Care Network Board and sits on the AMA’s Physician Recruitment and Retention Committee. In 2007-2008, he was recognized with the Rural Family Medicine Preceptor Award. From 2006 to 2009, his teaching skills earned him awards of excellence for Outstanding Clerkship Teaching at the University of Calgary.

George is married to Lenore and they have two adult children, Jessica and Daniel, as well as two grandchildren, Toryn and Xander. For recreation, George has moonlighted as a volunteer fireman and enjoys golfing, curling, cycling, fly fishing and sailing.

Dr. John Pawlovich MD, CCFP, FCFP

British Columbia

“The Reg L. Perkin Award defines the destination that my co-workers and I journey toward on a daily basis. It is with immense gratitude that I accept this award on behalf of all those with whom I share the privilege of working.”

Dr. John Pawlovich is a champion of rural family medicine. Having come to Fraser Lake, British Columbia, when it was an “impossible-to-recruit-to” community, he transformed it into a stable, exciting hive of interprofessional practice and education. John played a lead role in creating a nationally-recognized primary care referral centre that consistently excels in meeting the needs of his community and its surrounding regions. His perseverance in overcoming the inevitable is an inspiration to family physicians and those aspiring to embrace family practice.

Having earned his medical degree from the University of British Columbia, John obtained his Certification in 1996 and his Fellowship from the CFPC in 2007. In addition to a broad range of primary care services, John’s special interests extend to urgent, emergent and trauma care as well as cardiology services profiling his medical expertise and ability to arrange timely patient transfers to larger centres that show a high degree of respect for his opinions. To support these interests, John coordinates semi-annual “healthy heart” workshops and manages a diagnostic centre in his community.

To his students, John is an enthusiastic teacher. His clinic is the first choice for many trainees in the Northern Medical Undergraduate and Family Practice Residency program. John is also a mentor for his peers as a frequent presenter at numerous CPD events related to rural medicine and cardiac care.

John is married to Sarah who is also a family physician. Not surprisingly, his hobbies include hunting and fishing!
Family Physicians of the Year Website: http://fpoy.cfpc.ca

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