

Key Messages From the Winter 2021 Section of Residents Council Meeting

Resident Doctors Awareness Week 2021

Resident Doctors Awareness Week took place February 8th through 12th. The College of Family Physicians of Canada (CFPC) sincerely thanks all family medicine residents for their dedication.

Throughout the week the CFPC deployed messages on multiple platforms recognizing the vital roles resident doctors play as front-line health care providers. This included a CFPC website banner and social media posts as well as cross-promotion of Resident Doctors of Canada (RDoC; <https://residentdoctors.ca/>) activities.

The CFPC's Section of Residents (SoR) also hosted two live virtual sessions for peers and early-career family physicians to discuss questions residents had about transitioning to practice. The sessions were recorded and are available in the Practice Management Prep Resources Repository. To access them now, please sign up for free at <https://pmprep.firstfiveyears.ca/?sfwd-courses=practice-management-prep-pm-prep>. The First Five Years in Family Practice Committee (<https://firstfiveyears.ca/>) and the SoR Council (<https://www.cfpc.ca/en/member-services/committees/section-of-residents-council>) are exploring other opportunities to provide similar webinars in the future.

In addition, keep your eyes peeled for a small token of appreciation that the CFPC will be sending to all family medicine residents via your programs or training sites once it is safe to do so.

Resident wellness check-in

Resident wellness is of paramount importance. Members were asked to reflect on wellness and identify opportunities for the CFPC and SoR to support residents during the pandemic.

Members expressed that disruptions caused by COVID-19 have resulted in:

- Experiencing pandemic fatigue
- Lacking social support
- Missing family and friends
- Feeling uncertainty over future plans
- Being concerned about licensing
- Feeling disconnected from peers
- Experiencing an overall sentiment of being “robbed” of their residency experience

Residents also reported feeling guilty about these emotions and experiences.

Working groups are trying to advance peer mentorship opportunities and initiatives tied to wellness to address the concerns members raised. The SoR Council Executive reminded residents that despite not being able to meet and connect in person, they are here for members and they encouraged them to reach out for support as needed. The SoR has a seat on the RDoC board, and the SoR Council Executive mentioned RDoC also has robust wellness and resiliency resources on its website:

<https://residentdoctors.ca/areas-of-focus/wellness/>.

Canadian Family Physician (<https://www.cfp.ca/>) has an Art of Family Medicine section with stories and poetry from family physicians that may inspire and bring comfort to readers.

Resident engagement

Due to COVID-19 the SoR has moved to a virtual, condensed meeting format that replaces its two-day meetings. Noting the limitations of virtual meetings such as Zoom fatigue and challenges with maintaining engaging and interactive discussions, members were consulted on how to use virtual meetings in the future and how to foster meaningful and fulfilling experiences and opportunities for members. Members also brainstormed on how to ensure strong R1 candidates are elected to the SoR Council each fall.

The SoR Council Executive will be looking at ways to provide opportunities for the council to gain personal and professional knowledge through a leadership skills development session or smaller educational sessions on specific topics of interest during full council meetings.

Update on Guides for Improvement of Family Medicine Training

The 2020 Guide for Improvement of Family Medicine Training (GIFT) survey on climate change education in family medicine residency has been issued to all program directors and several focus groups were used to obtain feedback from residents. A draft set of recommendations has been shared with the SoR Council and work is under way to finalize the one-pager outlining proposed curriculum improvements.

How to address patients' interest in the use of cannabis for medical conditions has been selected as the 2021 GIFT topic. An environmental scan has been concluded and a survey on education in family medicine residency on the medical use of cannabis is being finalized. This survey will be issued to all family medicine residents and program directors in the late spring or summer, and the results will help narrow the focus of this project. Once the survey has been completed the 2021 GIFT Working Group will review the data and start working on the full guide and one-pager.

Be sure to check out our library of previous GIFT one-pagers at <https://www.cfpc.ca/en/education-professional-development/educational-frameworks-and-reference-guides/guides-for-improvement-of-family-medicine-training>.

SoR working group updates:

- The **Resident Relations Working Group** is developing a survey to gauge interest in potential topics for the new Residents' Corner peer mentorship group. The hope is to create a safe, non-judgmental space for residents where they can discuss various topics that affect them. Stay tuned for your chance to provide feedback!
- The **FMF Planning Working Group** is continuing to plan for Family Medicine Forum (<https://fmf.cfpc.ca/>), which is being held November 10 to 13, 2021, and will have select sessions available on demand until December 8, 2021. The call for abstracts for sessions and workshops has closed but the call for **free-standing papers and posters** is open until April 5th and the call for the **Big Ideas Soapbox** is open until April 30th at <https://fmf.cfpc.ca/abstracts/>.
- Members of the **Evaluation and Improvement Working Group** reached out to colleagues and site directors to identify areas of concern related to the COVID-19 pandemic and its effects on education. These areas were highlighted:
 - The lack of an appropriate framework for standards of care for virtual visits
 - Uncertainty around graduating or exam eligibility secondary to redeployment or mandatory self-isolation
 - Delayed graduation secondary to self-isolation or quarantine measures
 - A deterioration in mental health and sense of community secondary to increased and unexpected work duties

Working with the CFPC's Postgraduate Education Committee, two outcomes were achieved:

- A resource outlining tips for providing virtual care safely has been created and distributed to all academic sites to help residents and preceptors guide care with a focus on patients' privacy. It outlines the limitations of virtual visits and the need for in-person visits if they are deemed medically necessary by the provider. It is available at: <https://portal.cfpc.ca/resourcesdocs/en/Supervision-of-FM-Learners-for-Virtual-Visits-final.pdf>.
- Candidates who have missed up to eight weeks of curriculum due to redeployment or self-isolation throughout their terms are still eligible for graduation without question if they are otherwise in good academic standing. Those who have missed eight to 12 weeks will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Open forum with the CFPC Executive Director and CEO and the CFPC President

Members were asked to identify key educational issues and other timely topics that residents are facing at this time for an open discussion with Dr. Francine Lemire and Dr. Catherine Cervin.

Residents voiced concerns about the Medical Council of Canada (MCC)'s recent announcement that it is holding its MCCQE Part II exam at the end of May 2021 and in a virtual format. Provincial and territorial medical regulatory authorities (MRAs) make decisions related to awarding licensure to practise. In 2020, given the forced cancellation of examinations due to pandemic-related concerns, the provinces and territories varied in requiring the MCCQE Part II for licensure; most MRAs offered newly developed provisional or restricted licences and a few offered full licences, waiving the need for the MCCQE Part II. Knowing that the CFPC is a membership-based organization with family medicine residents as valued

members, the SoR Council requested advocacy from the CFPC on behalf of residents. Members raised several concerns about this year's timing of the MCCQE Part II and the issue of equity across provinces related to licensing requirements. They described the challenges faced in participating in this exam given their existing wellness concerns caused by the uncertainty the pandemic has placed on their abilities to complete their residency training and added stressors that have come with the changes. There is a desire for more clarity around the relevance and necessity of the MCCQE Part II moving forward.

Additionally, SoR Council members were asked to provide feedback that the CFPC could present to the newly struck MCC Assessment Innovation Task Force (AIT). This task force is reviewing the content and timing of the MCC exams and providing recommendations to the MCC. The learner representative on the AIT has also reached out to the SoR and is obtaining feedback from various stakeholders, including RDoC. The CFPC has an official representative on the AIT, Dr. Brent Kvern, Director of Certification and Examinations, who asked for feedback from the SoR to share as part of the CFPC's position. To facilitate getting the residents' perspectives on the MCC exams, a post-meeting survey is being sent to SoR Council representatives and the results will be collated and shared with the learner representative and the CFPC's representative on the AIT. The SoR Executive urged all council members to complete this important survey.

The CFPC leadership assured members that they understand and share their concerns regarding the added anxiety and stress created by the current situation. They reassured members that they are working hard to obtain additional information from the licensing bodies and the MCC to determine what the best actions are moving forward and will continue to communicate with the SoR Executive on this matter.

Joyce Ching, CFPC SoR Council, Executive Lead Internal

Questions or concerns should be directed to your SoR Council representatives, whose names can be found on the SoR web page: <https://www.cfpc.ca/en/member-services/committees/section-of-residents-council>.