

# The Future of Family Medicine in Canada

**10<sup>th</sup> International Medical Workforce  
Conference**

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**Dr. Calvin Gutkin**

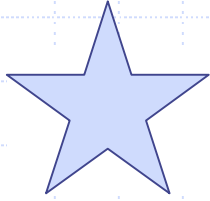
**Executive Director and Chief Executive Officer**

**The College of Family Physicians of Canada**



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# THE CHALLENGES

Family Physician Resources  
Medical Student Career Choice  
Primary Care Reform/Renewal  
Changing Roles and Scopes of Practice  
Practice Supports for FP's  
Education, Licensure and Certification  
New Vistas for Family Practice



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# History

- ◆ FP/GP numbers hit bottom in 1950's
- ◆ CFPC established in 1954
- ◆ Goal of enhancing credibility of family medicine as a respected medical discipline
- ◆ Family Medicine in all med schools(70's)
- ◆ 1980's Canadian HHR goal 50% of physicians should be FP/GP's
- ◆ Popularity among grads soars (1985-95)
- ◆ MD/FP shortages, burnout (late 90's)
- ◆ Fam Med popularity hits new low ( 2003)



# Family Physician Resources

Studies show better population health outcomes related to patient access to a primary care/family physician ( Starfield et al)

Every Canadian should have opportunity to have a family physician;

5 million Canadians do not have a family doctor; lengthy wait times for FP and from FP to other specialists

Increased numbers of family doctors moving into focused practices

Shortages impacting rural and urban communities; clinical and teaching settings

Challenges to recruit , train and retain both Canadian and international medical graduates



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# Strategies to rebuild fp resources and image of family practice in Canada

- ◆ Increased medical school focus on family medicine  
Increased number of family med residency positions, rural/urban; comprehensive and enhanced skills

PCR with enhanced supports/\$ for fp's

- ◆ recognition/promotion of value of fp's
- ◆ IMG support programs
- ◆ Family Medicine acknowledged as specialty discipline



# Medical Student Career Choice

- ◆ popularity peaks in 1980's and 90's
- ◆ low in 2003 (23% 1st choice)
- ◆ slowly recovering by 2006 (29-30%)
- ◆ Family Medicine Interest Groups
- ◆ Family Medicine Student Scholarships
- ◆ Family Medicine Student Leadership Awards
- ◆ FP image, new practice models , \$, lifestyle



# Primary Care Reform/Renewal

- ◆ To address access and HHR challenges
- ◆ New practice models
- ◆ Inter and intra professional teams
- ◆ Enhanced chronic disease mgmt in community
- ◆ Improved but targeted remuneration
- ◆ EHR/EMR



# Changing Roles and Scopes of Practice

- ◆ To improve access to care for patients and balance lives for FPs
- ◆ Education ,training , remuneration, legal and practice support challenges
- ◆ Intra and interprofessional practices :Comprehensive care FP's,focused practice FP's, other medical specialists, nurses, pharmacists, and other health professionals
- ◆ Shared Care models eg. mental health
- ◆ FP's in focused practices: eg Palliative care, Emergency, Hospitalists, Mental Health,etc





# Roles of Family Physicians



- ◆ Comprehensive front line/primary medical care
- ◆ Provide significant % of secondary care
- ◆ Focused practices – palliative care , etc
- ◆ Public health: health promotion, illness and injury prevention, chronic disease, emerg preparedness
- ◆ Teaching, research, and health system



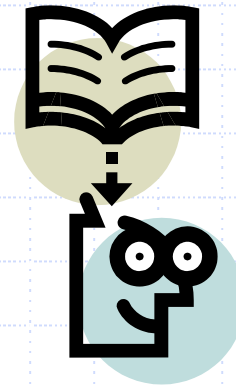
# System Supports Needed for FP

- ◆ Must address growing income gap between FPs and other specialists
- ◆ Electronic Health and Medical Records (EMR/EHRs) essential in every Primary Care /FP setting; Universal Coding Standard for Primary Care (ICPC-2)
- ◆ Interprofessional teams with other health care professionals
- ◆ Primary Care/Fam Med Teaching and Research



# Education, Licensure, and Certification

- ◆ Enhanced role for academic and community based FP's (urban and rural) in all medical schools as teachers, mentors and role models
- ◆ Standardize and harmonize exams required to obtain and maintain Certification in Family Medicine (CCFP) and full unrestricted license to practice as a family physician



# Future Vistas for Family Medicine



- ◆ Inter and intra professional teams
- ◆ Provision of comprehensive and focused care
- ◆ Lead role in introduction of EHR in prim care
- ◆ Public Health: major role in prevention , chronic disease mgmt, emerg preparedness
- ◆ New and increased roles in care of the elderly, palliative care ; hospital care; genetics
- ◆ Increased prim care/health system research
- ◆ Enhanced image; the specialty of family medicine

