

## **Reinventing the Doctor's Lounge: Quality Improvement, Innovation, and the Referral-Consultation Process**

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### **Context**

The referral-consultation process is identified by both family physicians and other specialists as a key element to support and sustain the timely provision of good medical care. The College of Family Physicians of Canada (CFPC), Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada (RCPSC), and the Canadian Medical Association (CMA) are collaborating to identify the key elements of good physician relationships that matter in the provision of health care.

### **Objectives**

1. To define key barriers and enablers to the development of excellent relationships between family physicians and other specialists;
2. To identify key core competencies expected of all physicians related to intra professionalism
3. To identify key elements of good referral-consultation and produce a tool to support this
4. To identify the system supports necessary to support innovation and continuous quality improvement in this area

### **Methods**

- a. Background information from the 1993 CFPC/RCPSC document: "The Relationship between Family Physicians and Specialists/Consultants in the Provision of Patient Care"
- b. January 2006 Colloquium which led to the publication of the Report: "Family Physicians and other Specialists: Working and Learning Together"
- c. Two working groups were created, one to develop core competencies related to intra-professionalism, the other to develop a guide for referral-consultation
- d. The CMA, in collaboration with the CFPC and the RCPSC is developing a toolkit to streamline the referral process

**Results**

1. Intraprofessional Core Competencies (ICCs), modelled after the CanMEDS roles and the Four Principles of Family Medicine, related to the relationship between family physicians and other specialists have been developed;
2. A guide for referral and consultation has been produced

**Conclusion**

The pursuit of excellent relationships between family doctors and other specialists is a key enabler to the provision of high quality care. These new tools/resources can be used by regional health authorities, and governments to influence health policy and practice.