

Ontario College of  
Family Physicians



*Leaders for a healthy Ontario*

YEAR IN REVIEW  
2019-2020

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# President's Message



Being President of the Ontario College of Family Physicians has been an immense privilege and challenge this last year, as we all reeled under the strain of the COVID pandemic. We faced our own fears and those of our patients, and revolutionized the way we deliver care in our offices and in our communities. We stepped up to the many challenges and navigated the many uncertainties, and the health of Ontario is better for it.

Listening to your concerns and advocating for them has been a focus of my activities. I have taken pride in the “open rate” of the President’s Messages that have gone out to our membership more frequently, as the OCFP stepped up with practical information for family physicians. Each President’s Message generated a new round of valuable feedback from you, to which we responded and acted as fully and promptly as possible.

We have often been viewed as “The Education College” – our offerings are evolving as we see member needs changing and of course as we respond to the challenges of COVID. The OCFP is committed to education that is brought to you by family physicians, and as free of industry influence as possible.

That being said, you have asked us repeatedly to advocate for family medicine within the healthcare system. We do so proudly, informed by evidence that shows the value of family physicians in the success of any high functioning healthcare system.

We have been strongly advocating for family physician involvement in the development of Ontario Health Teams. They will not meet their goals of population health without family physician leadership and without the participation of family physicians in their communities. The OCFP launched an innovative certified OHT program, up to 60 credits per year – it is a true learning experience for many of us to connect to a bigger system.

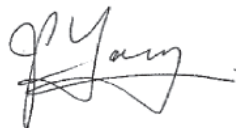
The Board has recruited new Directors and we look forward to bringing their skills to help govern the OCFP and create our next Strategic Plan. What does this organization need to be doing for the family physicians of Ontario, reflecting the diversity of members and practices, over the next five years? Our member survey and ongoing input from you and other stakeholders will help guide our evolving roadmap.

We continue to collaborate with the Section on General and Family Practice at the OMA as we support our shared membership. We connect regularly with our national organization, the College of Family Physicians of Canada. Our valued stakeholders are too many to mention but we list a few others on page 7.

New partnerships have been nurtured this year. We will have a Relationship Accord with the Nishnawbe Aski Nation that is due to be signed (postponed due to COVID), reinforcing our commitment to helping our members better manage their relationships with their Indigenous patients and communities. We are sharing more educational offerings, developed by Indigenous communities, on our website.

I am proud of the staff of OCFP who keep our Mission, Vision and Values truly front and centre as they work to support you. The Board has taken its governing seriously, and made some tough decisions based on what our membership has said. After September, I will be handing over the role of President to Dr. Liz Muggah, and Dr. Mekalai Kumanan steps into the role of President-Elect. I have full confidence in their abilities and commitment to family medicine.

Serving you as President of the OCFP has been an honour – thank you for the opportunity and all the best to you, in all the roles that you fulfill for your patients and your community.



**Jennifer Young, CCFP(EM), FCFP**

President, Ontario College of Family Physicians

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2019-20

Dr. Jennifer Young, President  
Dr. Elizabeth Muggah, President-Elect  
Dr. Nelson Chan, Secretary-Treasurer  
Dr. Sundeep Banwatt

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Dr. Amy Catania  
Dr. Jane Charters  
Dr. Jayde Duncombe

Dr. Mekalai Kumanan  
Mr. Terry McCarthy  
Dr. Abhishek Raut  
Mr. Bruce Squires

Dr. Lindsey Sutherland  
Dr. Jobin Varughese

# CEO's Message



As family physicians, you specialize in your patients' care. At the Ontario College of Family Physicians, we specialize in you. The singular focus on serving our 15,000 members – ensuring you can excel in your practice and thrive in your profession – is what drives us in our work.

That work entails offering you professional development programs and conferences shaped by family physicians, for family physicians, as well as developing or curating tools and resources for your point-of-care use. In the midst of a rapidly evolving healthcare and practice landscape, we also continued to amplify your voices at various provincial tables to underscore your vital role in our health system.

The fundamental shifts created by COVID-19 shaped much of our work this past year. Whether seeking solutions to the inequities faced by many of you and your patients, bringing your ideas and challenges to decision makers as you adjust your practices, moving all of our CPD programs to virtual delivery, or collaborating with partners to bring you up-to-date resources and information – your needs were our guide.

I am most grateful for the leadership of Dr. Jennifer Young, President, and the OCFP's very dedicated Board of Directors – not only during the recent pandemic, but throughout the past year. They voluntarily contribute significant time and dedication to ensuring your collective voices inform our priorities, notably our advocacy on your behalf, while also governing a strong and sustainable organization.

In addition, my sincere gratitude to the many other individuals and organizations that enable our work: the OCFP's committees, faculty and mentors; our partners in primary care; and last but certainly not least our amazing staff for always keeping our members at the centre of everything we do.

The activities outlined in this Year in Review are anchored by our members, who remind us to continue to work toward our vision – Leaders for a Healthy Ontario.



**Leanne Clarke**

CEO, Ontario College of Family Physicians

## About the Ontario College of Family Physicians

### *Leaders for a Healthy Ontario*



Professional association devoted exclusively to Ontario's family physicians.

**15,000+**

Members province-wide and in all practice types.



Mission to support our members – through education, leadership, research and advocacy – to deliver high-quality health care within a healthy profession.

# Family Physicians. Our Priority.

## We listen, we understand, we act

As a member organization, how can we be sure that our programs and the resources we provide are adding value to your work and making your professional lives better?

Simply put, we ask you – through email exchanges, on various committees, and at our workshops and conferences. And then, every other year, we seek your insights more formally through member research.

In 2019, we conducted in-person and online focus groups, as well as an online survey, to deepen our understanding of your needs. Your insights are critical, and help ensure we best support your life-long learning, champion your work and the profession, and advocate for your vital role. Below is a snapshot of what you told us.

## What Ontario's Family Physicians Told Us\*

### ► MOST CHALLENGING CLINICAL ISSUES



Pain management/chronic pain/opioids



Child/youth & adult mental health

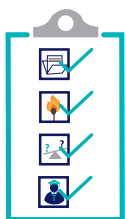


Addictions/substance use disorders



Age and related complexity

### ► MOST CHALLENGING PRACTICE ISSUES



- Administrative burden/paperwork
- Workload/burnout
- Managing patient expectations
- Accessing specialists and patient referrals

### ► CLINICAL NEEDS



Supports to help you further excel in your practice, through tools and other professional development programs – including virtual delivery.

### ► PRIORITY AREAS FOR ADVOCACY



- Having equitable access to cohesive, team-based care
- Streamlined specialist access



- Better access to resources for complex/chronic illnesses
- Better care coordination between primary care, acute care and home care

\* 13,512 OCFP members were invited to participate in the OCFP Membership Survey between 22 Aug and 30 Sept 2019. A total of 826 fully completed the survey and 252 partially completed it. The margin of error is +/-2.9 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.

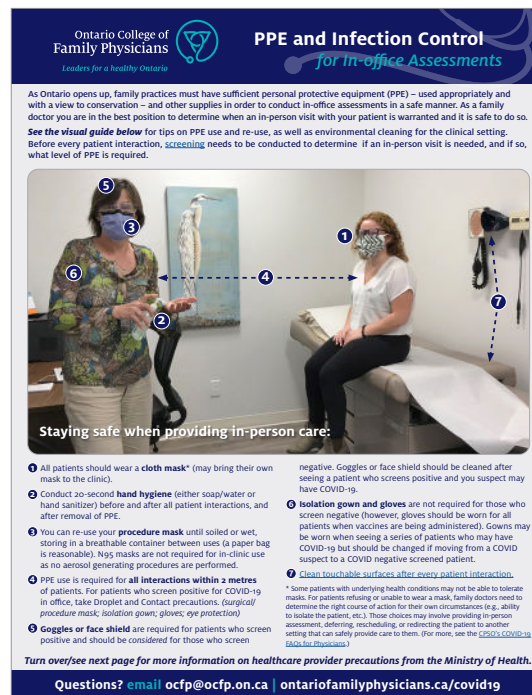
# Responding to COVID-19



Since COVID-19 hit in early 2020, bringing unprecedented disruption to your practices, patients and our communities, you—our members—have been standing firmly on the front lines of this pandemic.

The OCFP has advanced work on many fronts to support you through this evolving situation. Under the leadership of OCFP President Dr. Jennifer Young, we struck a mini-COVID response team with Dr. Sarah Newbery, OCFP Past President, to review provincial communications and fill gaps to help you in practice. Our focus is helping you manage through this time. We have been doing this by:

- Advocating (page 7) on the issues with the greatest impact on your practice and ability to care for your patients.
- Working with our partner organizations on other related challenges for you, ranging from the certification exam to residency rotations to re-opening of patient labs.
- Compiling timely resources and creating tip sheets for you on [PPE](#) and [in-person care](#), and for your patients on [flattening the curve](#), [seeking care when needed](#), and [cancer screening](#). Our communications have clearly resonated, with the OCFP [President's Messages](#) being accessed by 70 per cent of members in the earlier days of the pandemic – setting a new standard that is significantly higher than industry benchmarks.
- Bringing the family physician perspective to numerous provincial COVID-related stakeholder tables. We were pleased to have the Ministry of Health incorporate OCFP feedback and refer to our resources and tools in its guidance to the primary care sector.
- Informing the work of the [Centre for Effective Practice](#) as they develop tools to support your practice in the COVID-19 context.
- Bringing together family physicians from across the province in our bi-weekly [COVID-19 Community of Practice](#), in partnership with the University of Toronto's Department of Family and Community Medicine. The CoP is a virtual meeting place for shared learning by family physicians, for family physicians, and is open to all family physicians in Ontario. With featured speakers and more than 100 joining regularly, the community shares practical information and resources on timely topics, from office readiness to caring for vulnerable patients.



*Dr. Jennifer Young writes about how virtual care will shift the practice of family medicine.*



# Advocating for You

We continued this past year to advocate for a high-quality system with family physicians as its bedrock and the structures that ensure you can continue to do what you do best – care for your patients.

We have outlined, below, some of the ways we amplified the issues you have told us most affect your practice, patients and communities. We are grateful for the many productive working relationships with our partners across the health system who inform and support this work, including: the College of Family Physicians of Canada; the Association of Family Health Teams of Ontario; Council of Ontario Faculties of Medicine – Family Medicine; the Ontario Medical Association and the OMA Section on General and Family Practice; the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario; The Change Foundation; and the Nurse Practitioners' Association of Ontario, among others.



## Support for All Practice Models Through COVID-19

### *The need to address inequities in our profession*

The impacts of the pandemic on members have left some struggling to provide care for their patients. Together with the SGFP, we wrote to OHIP regarding inappropriate delays in reimbursement for new virtual care codes. We also sent a [letter](#) to Minister of Health, Christine Elliott, and, thankfully, this issue was resolved.

Serious challenges remain, though, and we know that disparities across our profession undermine you and your ability to care for your patients. In our [submission](#) to the OMA-MOH Primary Care Working Group (PCWG), we called out the need for equity across practice models so that all family physicians can deliver comprehensive care and thrive in practice. We followed this with a [second submission](#) and presentation directly to the OMA Negotiations Task Force.

Our thanks to all members who reached out to us about this critical issue. Your stories put urgency to our call for equity for our colleagues and for our patients.

### *Highlighting critical PPE shortages*

In partnership with the Association of Family Health Teams of Ontario and Nurse Practitioners' Association of Ontario, we [sought urgent assistance](#) from Minister of Health, Christine Elliott, to facilitate your access to PPE to safeguard your health and the health of your staff and patients. We were pleased when community-based family physicians in need of PPE were finally able to receive it on a transitional basis at no cost through the province's pandemic supply.

## FAMILY PHYSICIAN

FAM-I-LY PHY-SI-CIAN (n)

healer, protector, advocate, expert,  
storyteller, clinician, immunizer,  
fighter, friend, educator, innovator,  
councillor, deliverer, confidante,  
leader, employer, warrior, etc.

OF

your father, mother, daughter, son,  
aunt, uncle, cousin, partner, wife,  
husband, grandma, grandpa,  
neighbour, friend, peer, coworker,  
person, people, everyone, etc.

**You & your family.**

## Responding to the Primary Care Working Group

Our [submission](#) to the Primary Care Working Group (PCWG), shaped by member feedback and members of our Board, addressed the identified areas of access and quality, complexity modifiers, walk-in clinics and GP focused practice designation. We appreciated the encouragement from members conveyed in messages like these:

*"Thank you for your leadership and for giving all of us the opportunity to raise our concerns and be heard."*

*"I wanted to commend you on the excellent recommendations document. It is my new primary reference on moving primary care forward."*

## Sharing Ways to Strengthen Home and Community Care

We shared a more in-depth [family physician perspective](#) on Bill 175, *An Act to amend and repeal various Acts respecting home care and community services*. Our recommendations include the need to anchor care coordination in primary care, and to enhance your access and ongoing connection to homecare services for your vulnerable patients. We delivered a [follow-up submission](#) months later to reinforce these imperatives.

## Coordinating with Ontario's Faculties of Medicine

The OCFP meets quarterly with Chairs of the Departments of Family Medicine. The group often discusses the provincial policy issues that affect the profession and where joint action may be needed.

## Weighing in on Public Health Modernization

The OCFP participated in the Ministry of Health's consultation on [public health modernization](#), highlighting those areas that are functioning well and our suggestions for improvement. Primary care and public health have complementary mandates, and there is a compelling need – and tremendous opportunity – to build bridges between these two vital areas of health care.

## Sharing our Input on the Provincial Budget

We submitted a [response](#) to the Government of Ontario's 2020 Budget consultations, answering the following question: How can the provincial government make your experiences with the healthcare system more efficient, accessible and patient centred?

Our answer in a nutshell: enable better access to team-based care for all family physicians; anchor care coordination in primary care; and facilitate family physician leadership in health system co-design and implementation.

## Commenting on Prescribing by Registered Nurses and Pharmacists

The OCFP shared feedback as part of two separate consultations related to prescribing by [registered nurses](#) (RNs) and [pharmacists](#). We appreciate the important contributions RNs and pharmacists make across our healthcare system, and the opportunity to help shape regulation that works for patients in primary care while also reducing the potential for misdiagnoses and fragmentation.

On World Family Doctor Day 2020, we proudly celebrated the dedication of family physicians and their commitment to being leaders for a healthy Ontario. [Check out our short video.](#)



# Connecting with Emerging Leaders

As future leaders of our profession, family medicine residents play a key role in informing our work and advancing activities that support their peers. We are grateful for the time, insights and passion of the 2019-20 [OCFP Residents Committee members](#) – PGY1s and PGY2s representing the six medical schools in Ontario.

In addition to updating and redesigning our [Family Medicine Residency: A Survival Guide](#), Committee members helped launch a new COVID-19 fund for medical student and resident-focused initiatives aimed at supporting their peers during the pandemic.

Residents and medical students also took advantage of our long-standing [fund](#), designed to support skills building and professional networking.



Dr. Ada Gu, Co-Chair, OCFP Residents Committee 2019-2020

**While some school events were cancelled due to COVID-19, below are those that did take place this past year prior to the pandemic:**



**Queen's:** “All Things Sharp” workshop in which medical students were trained in the administration of IV lines, joint injections, and intramuscular/subcutaneous injections.



**Ottawa:** “Resident’s Night” in which pre-clerkship students learned all about family medicine residency from current residents, through rotating tables on topics such as CaRMS, diversity of practice, work-life balance and a day in the life.



**Western:** Three-hour workshop to teach family medicine residents how to perform various bedside ultrasound scans for clinical presentations commonly encountered in primary care practice.



**U of T:** Family Medicine Career Night where medical students and family medicine residents heard from staff physicians who have completed extra training in Obstetrics, Emergency Medicine, Hospitalist Medicine and Women’s Health.

# Ontario Health Teams

With Ontario Health Teams (OHTs) well underway in the province's effort to better connect care, the importance of your role in this process cannot be overstated. As the evidence attests, family physicians are the backbone of all high-performing health systems, and your involvement must be nurtured and supported for health reform to fully succeed.

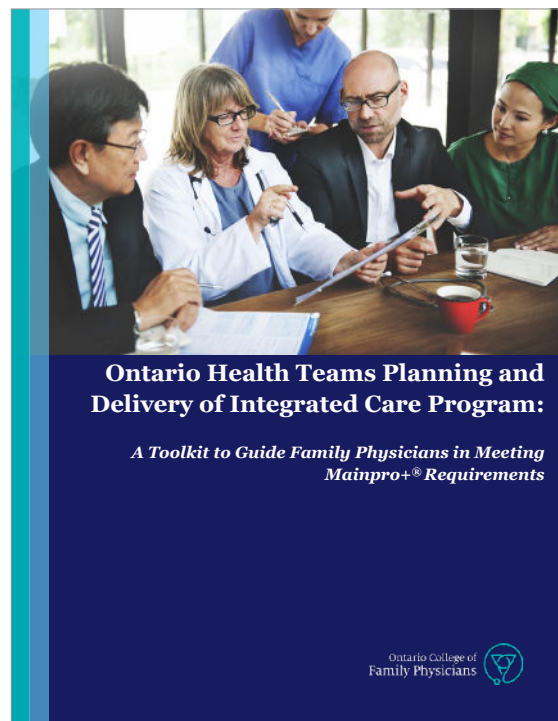
The OCFP remains committed to ensuring that all family physicians – regardless of practice model or location – will benefit from Ontario's healthcare transformation efforts. Our member research (see visual on page 11) revealed that you want the OCFP to advocate on your behalf and to keep you informed. Here are some of the ways we did that this past year.

## With family doctors and OHTs

- We launched a new learning program for work and engagement with OHTs. The [OHT Planning and Delivery of Integrated Care Program](#) enables you to earn up to 60 Mainpro+® certified credits as you work toward the learning objectives, from early planning of the OHT through to sustained implementation. This program supports engaging clinical leaders in successfully shaping the changes ahead and recognizes their time and efforts through CPD credits.

To support the program, we developed the [OHT Planning and Delivery of Integrated Care Toolkit](#) to explain how to meet Mainpro+ requirements, and to outline the related requirements for the OHTs themselves.

- We compiled and shared [information and resources](#) on how and when you might get involved in an OHT. Along with the OMA Section on General and Family Practice, we also took part in and/or promoted the Association of Family Health Teams of Ontario's regional OHT information sessions for family physicians.
- For the OHTs, we created a [tip sheet](#) with guidance on how they can maximize the involvement of family doctors, including those in solo practice.



### ENSURING THE SUCCESS OF OHTs

*We have heard anecdotally that family doctors who were meaningfully engaged in local OHT work before the pandemic hit naturally upheld a sense of peer support to tackle COVID-19 together. Now, more than ever, we need to have care delivered through a regional system where all family doctors in Ontario can participate, regardless of their practice model.*

~ President Dr. Jennifer Young on the importance of connection. Read her article in [Healthy Debate](#).

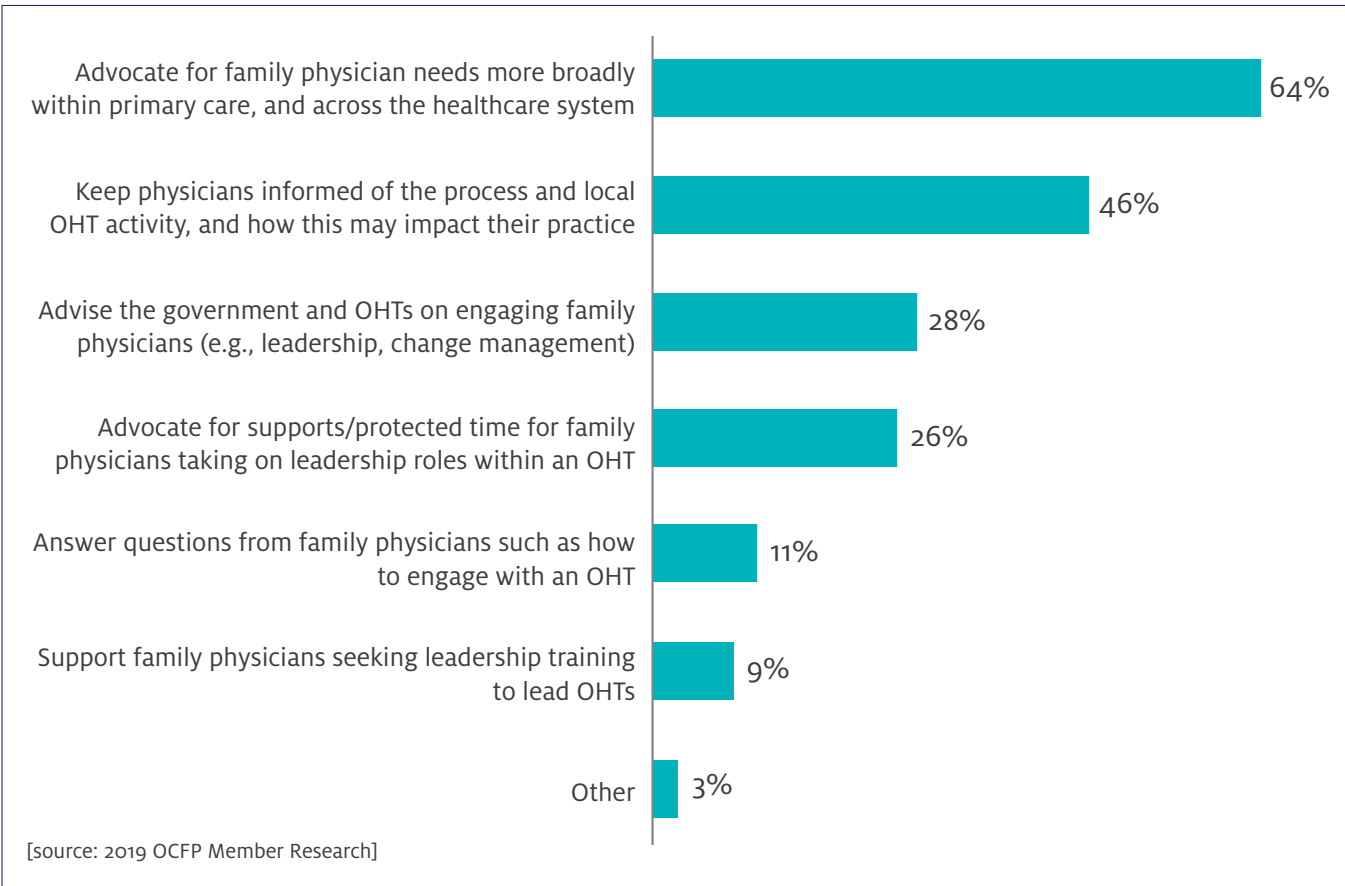


# Primary Care Collaboration

- Our [Primary Care Virtual Community](#) ran a session on [how primary care regions are building local connections](#). You can read more about our PCVC (on page 12), which is convened by The Change Foundation and co-hosted with the Association of Family Health Teams of Ontario (AFHTO), the OMA Section on General and Family Practice, and the Nurse Practitioners' Association of Ontario.
- Along with AFHTO, we attend monthly meetings with the Ministry of Health's OHT implementation team to champion your essential role in transformation efforts and reinforce the need for protected time for clinical leadership.
- We hold regular meetings together with the Ontario Medical Association and the Section on General and Family Practice, the Association of Family Health Teams of Ontario, and the Ontario Hospital Association, to share OHT resources and coordinate efforts.
- Supporting family physician leaders was part of our Leadership mentoring network. While direct funding of this mentorship was not renewed, we continue to emphasize the need to support and grow family physician leadership in all health system changes.

# Desired Role of the OCFP in OHT Work

Our OHT work responds directly to your feedback – you want the OCFP to advocate on your behalf and keep you informed.



# Highlights in CPD

## Primary Care Virtual Community

More than a thousand healthcare professionals connected this past year through the [Primary Care Virtual Community](#) (PCVC), Ontario's innovative collaborative designed to help clinicians lead and spark meaningful improvements in primary care. This virtual forum is hosted by the OCFP together with the Association of Family Health Teams of Ontario, the OMA Section on General and Family Practice, and the Nurse Practitioners' Association of Ontario, and convened by The Change Foundation.

We thank Dr. Robert Varnam from the UK's NHS for sharing lessons learned and inspiring PCVC participants to adapt the UK's [10 High Impact Actions](#) to the Ontario context.

### COVID-19 Community of Practice

The COVID-19 CoP took shape in response to your need for timely, relevant learning in a fast-evolving situation. Read more about this popular forum for practical professional development on page 6 of this report.

## The OCFP's Mentoring Program



Our long-standing commitment to mentoring stems from the powerful benefits it can bring to a clinician's competence and confidence, as well as boosting the capacity of primary care. These benefits are heightened further when the mentoring addresses clinically complex patients.

More than 1,300 family-physician Mentees took part in our mentoring program over the last year, honing their knowledge and skills in areas such as palliative care and primary care leadership. In recognition of such contributions to education in health, the OCFP's Collaborative Mentoring Networks received two awards: the Ted Freedman Award for Innovation in Education – an international honour – and the College of Family Physicians of Canada's Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Program Award.

Our renewed agreement with the Ministry of Health is designed to support family physicians, especially those in limited resource settings, in the areas of mental health, addictions and chronic pain. Those are among the most challenging clinical areas you manage, according to our member research.

## The CARE Course

In partnership with the Rural Coordination Centre of British Columbia, the OCFP delivered Comprehensive Approaches to Rural Emergencies (The CARE Course) in Ontario. Our 2019 evaluation found The CARE Course filled a clear need for emergency medicine training and addressed the unique challenges of rural interprofessional teams.

Physicians who took part in the Ontario pilots self-reported improvements in skills and knowledge, and all participants noted improved individual confidence. Other impacts included better team functioning through improved communication, better understanding of each other's roles, and standardized responses to high-acuity patients.



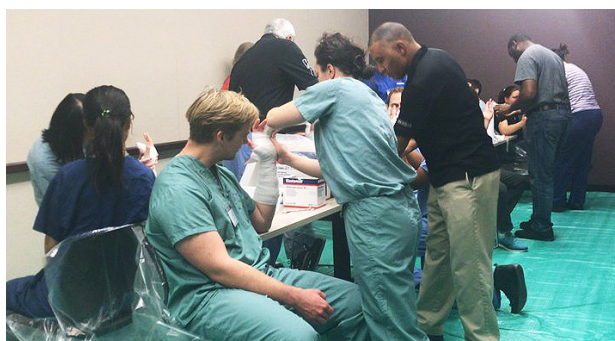
*[Our team] had a case of multiple blunt trauma [...] where they had to really pull out all the stops, chest tubes, organize transfer. Everything in the course was put to use. The victim survived.*

*[The situation] was handled by the younger team members. It's not uncommon for them to look for me, but in this case, they dealt with it themselves. It was obvious in the debrief that they were comfortable and satisfied with how they brought the team together.*

~ Physician participant in The CARE Course



## Annual Family Medicine Conference



We firmly believe that learning events for family physicians should be shaped by family physicians. Guided by that principle, we were pleased once again to see our Annual Scientific Assembly and workshops rated highly for delivering clinically relevant content that members can apply directly to practice.

Our annual conference in November had 106 timely topics, 61 exhibitors, and a day dedicated to hands-on skills building. Highlights included a special networking event for residents and early career family doctors, and a film

screening about Ontario family physician May Cohen, a pioneer in gender issues in family medicine.

Here's what some members had to say:



*Therapeutic – I needed the break from practice, the knowledge update and chance to meet with colleagues. Always a good conference – good speakers, credible. I've come every year for 30 years and enjoy it.*

*Good because it focused on topics on minorities and topics that are not included in other conferences: people with disabilities, transgender, sexuality, etc.*



**FMS** FAMILY MEDICINE SUMMIT

Our annual conference (now called the '[Family Medicine Summit](#)' instead of the 'Annual Scientific Assembly') has been moved to a unique virtual format and will take place in late January/February 2021 instead of the usual time in November. Please watch for more details to come.

## Workshops

The OCFP's CPD offerings range from sessions focused on musculoskeletal assessment to workshops on how to support your patients with mood disorders. Below is a recap of one of our programs for the past year.

### Practising Wisely: Reducing Unnecessary Testing and Treatment

Managing patient expectations is among the most challenging practice issues, according to our member research (see page 5). Practising Wisely is a popular OCFP-developed, certified CPD program that supports family physicians in using the latest evidence to help reduce over-medicalization and support shared decision-making with patients.

This past year, with additional funding from the College of Family Physicians of Canada, we partnered with the Quebec chapter and together worked with other provincial chapters to refresh the content to reflect new clinical guidelines and advice. We are also reconfiguring the program to allow for additional modules.



All told, **30** trained faculty have delivered **99** Practising Wisely workshops to more than **1,600** family physicians in eight provinces. The impact on practice is significant and undeniable: after completing the program, **93 per cent** of participants report confidence in building consensus with patients, up from 67 per cent before the program.



# Celebrating Family Medicine

Each year, we proudly celebrate our profession through the OCFP Awards. The 2019 recipients (listed below) exemplify the vital work that family doctors do every day to create a healthier Ontario. Read more about these recipients [here](#).



## 2019 OCFP Awards Recipients

Ontario Family Physician of the Year: **Dr. Jocelyn Charles**

Awards of Excellence:

**Dr. Farhan Muhammad Asrar**

**Dr. Tara Baldisera**

**Dr. Paul Gill**

**Dr. Tina Hu**

**Dr. Peter Kizoff**

**Dr. Arun Radhakrishnan**

**Dr. Helen Senderovich**

**Dr. James Shaver**

**Dr. Richard Waldolf**

**Dr. Catherine Yu**

Team of **Dr. William Ruddock,**  
**Dr. Richard Helyar, Dr. Shira Thomas,**  
**Dr. Steve Traplin, Dr. Cary Shafir,**  
**Dr. Sid Brodovsky, and Dr. Carol Thomson**

OCFP Awards recipients were profiled in 78 media stories in print, radio and TV across Ontario

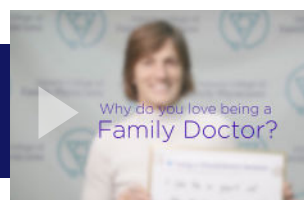
The OCFP Awards are one way we shine a light on the incredible work in family medicine. In these extraordinary times, we wish to acknowledge the [passion and commitment](#) to excellence that underpins our profession, which has been especially inspiring throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. The OCFP extends its sincere gratitude to all of you for the many ways you contribute to patients, colleagues, communities and the practice of family medicine.

## Changes in 2020

This past year we conducted a review of the OCFP Awards, leading to [refreshed awards categories](#) that reflect the evolution and diversity of practice within our profession.

Due to COVID-19, we paused our 2020 awards in all categories except the Reg L. Perkin Ontario Family Physician of the Year. All nominations for 2020 will be eligible in their categories for 2021.

Watch: OCFP Members share their love for family medicine.





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