

# 2020/2021 Annual Report



BC COLLEGE OF  
FAMILY PHYSICIANS  
*The home of family medicine*

Stories of family  
physician impact

Residents and  
students making  
a difference

Celebrating the  
specialty of  
family medicine





## President's message

*"Family physicians have adapted to changes in health delivery, but we will always value the face-to-face encounter with our patients and their families."*

Over the centuries, there have been long periods in which medical knowledge barely advanced. Progress came at a glacial pace and dissemination of information was equally slow, with textbooks often out of date by the time they reached press. In the last hundred years, however, there has been an exponential explosion of knowledge that has changed our way of practising medicine. The family physician has always had to be adaptable and capable of processing a large volume of ever-changing knowledge

For a long time, however, the visit to the doctor stayed the same – whether we travelled by horse-drawn buggy or in a car, the journey ended in a waiting room and an office. All of that rapidly changed in March 2020; suddenly, our offices were empty and we had to triage patients by phone and learn to examine them via video call. Family physicians offered to serve on the front lines of the pandemic. We went to work every day in hospitals, clinics, outreach centres, and on Zoom, always wondering if this would be the day we encountered COVID-19. As the pandemic grew, we witnessed an incredible feat of global cooperation of medical research in the development of a vaccine in less than a year. Family physicians signed up to administer those vaccines.

Family physicians have adapted to changes in health delivery, but we will always value the face-to-face encounter with our patients and their families. We are about listening, caring, building relationships and supporting our patients to make positive changes in their lives. We are there to provide comfort and information throughout the circle of life. We welcome and rejoice new life and walk with our patients on their end-of-life journey.

When we emerge from this pandemic, the world will look very different. We have now all experienced first-hand the rapid global transmission of disease. Health must be considered a worldwide concept, with safety planning crossing all politics and borders and considering all peoples. The damage that societal racism and indifference have caused has been painfully focused for all to see, with health inequities in our province and beyond exacerbated by the pandemic. I am hopeful that this moment will incite waves

of positive change that will be felt for generations to come. Family physicians need to be a part of this change: we must be seen and heard in our communities as advocates for equal access to health care for all peoples.

The other epidemic faced by our province is addiction, with illicit drug toxicity the leading cause of death for people aged between 19 and 39 in BC. We need to open our hearts and minds and collaborate to find an effective treatment for this disease that will return people to a full and healthy life.

In the backdrop of these challenges is the continued issue of family physician access in our province. We estimate that 15% of British Columbians do not have access to a family physician; the alternatives currently on offer do not connect people with the relationship-based, longitudinal care they need. Virtual care services are not sufficient for those who do not have a cell phone, access to internet, or a safe, private place to speak with their physician.

Our challenge as family physicians is to consider how we can become advocates for meaningful, lasting change in these areas. We must communicate to health care stakeholders to ensure our voices and patients' voices are heard and our knowledge of our communities is utilized in policy making.

I want to personally thank you all for your hard work over the last 18 months. I know many of you have put yourselves and your families at risk by serving on the front lines, doing so because you are a professional who cares. Thank you for all that you do. Never give up being a strong voice and an advocate for the changes we need to see. It has been a privilege to serve as your president.

Dr. Marjorie Docherty, CCFP, FCFP  
President



# Executive Director’s message

*“It’s clear that through the challenges of the past year, family physicians have been a great source of support, comfort and care for their patients and communities.”*

Above all else, thank you for the outstanding work you have done this past year within your communities and for your patients. Since last fall, our province has faced many challenges – challenges that could not have been overcome without the hard work and commitment of family physicians. You supported patients through the stressors of the COVID-19 pandemic, worked with your communities to manage and prevent outbreaks, and administered the vaccines that allowed us to reunite with our loved ones. All of this was done on top of your daily work of caring and advocating for patients. Every year, my admiration for the family medicine profession is renewed.

The past year has felt heavy. The disproportionate impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, the ongoing overdose crisis, the findings of the *In Plain Sight* report, and the discovery of mass graves at former residential school sites have shown us that there is still so much work to be done if we hope to achieve social justice and health equity in our province and country.

At the same time, we have heard so many stories worthy of celebration. We received more nominations for our annual awards than ever before – over 350 British Columbians told us how their lives would not be the same without their

family doctor, while dozens of members wrote letters to share their appreciation for an outstanding colleague. It’s clear that through the challenges of the past year, family physicians have been a great source of support, comfort and care for their patients and communities.

Our goal is to continue supporting your work as we step forward into this changed world together. Our Strategic Plan 2021-2024 lays out our intention to continue advocating for you, while strengthening our efforts to embed cultural safety and humility and build anti-racism in health care. Thank you for your input into the development of this plan.

Finally, thank you to our Board, committees, working groups, and staff for continuing to collaborate remotely and for your hard work to transform our Family Medicine Conference and Dinner with Docs to successful virtual events.

I wish all of you a healthy, happy and successful year ahead. Thank you for all that you do.

Toby Achtman, MHA, CAE  
Executive Director

## BCCFP Board of Directors 2020/21

- Dr. Marjorie Docherty – *President*
- Dr. David May – *Vice President*
- Dr. Jeanette Boyd – *Past President*
- Dr. Christine Singh – *Treasurer*
- Dr. Justine Spencer – *Secretary*

- Dr. Terri Aldred
- Dr. Katherine Bell
- Dr. Brenda Hardie
- Dr. Dan Horvat
- Dr. Alicia Pawluk

- Dr. Serena Verma
- Dr. Sean Wachtel
- Dr. Vincent Wong

# The unique value of family physicians

Working together, family physicians are the only health care providers equipped to deliver relationship-based, comprehensive, longitudinal care across all stages of life and specific to their communities. We created a resource to highlight the evidence that care from a family physician is valued by British Columbians; leads to better overall health outcomes; and results in lower overall costs to the health care system.

*Click to download and share this BCCFP resource with colleagues and other stakeholders in health care to let them know your value!*

**THE UNIQUE VALUE OF FAMILY PHYSICIANS**

Working together, family physicians are the only health care providers equipped to deliver relationship-based, comprehensive, longitudinal care across all stages of life and specific to their communities. Here's just a sample of the evidence that proves this form of care results in better overall health outcomes, higher patient satisfaction, and reduced costs to the health care system.<sup>1</sup>

**RELATIONSHIP-BASED**

- The 85% of British Columbians who have an ongoing relationship with a family physician place a high value on this relationship and have higher overall satisfaction with the health care system.<sup>2</sup>
- British Columbians value the role family physicians play in coordinating care with other specialists and advocating for complex care needs.<sup>3</sup>
- Family physicians are experts in caring for the whole person through all stages of life, taking into account their culture, financial status, past traumas, and other aspects that impact health.

**COMPREHENSIVE**

- Family physicians deal with a wide spectrum of clinical problems from an early stage through to resolution, including acute disorders, chronic diseases, mental health, complex illnesses and life transitions.
- Family physicians deliver complex care across multiple settings, including clinics, hospitals, long-term care facilities, and in patients' homes.

**FAMILY MEDICINE**

As specialists in the whole person, family physicians' depth of training, knowledge and skills makes them a flexible and irreplaceable resource in their communities. They fill a unique central leadership role in health care that cannot be replaced by other professions.

Most family physicians complete 11 years of training before entering practice, making them the most trained professionals in primary care. They have a strong understanding of community needs and are the drivers of collaboration and continuity in an effective primary health care system.

**LONGITUDINAL**

- Attachment to a family physician is associated with lower mortality due to heart disease, cancer, and stroke, as well as better diabetes care.<sup>4</sup>
- Ongoing care from a family physician helps patients navigate the health care system, improving efficiency and reducing overall costs.<sup>11</sup>
- 76% of British Columbians identify their family physician as the first point of contact for a health concern. Family physicians handle the majority of health care issues over a patient's lifetime.<sup>5</sup>
- The continuity of care provided by family physicians is associated with improved identification and management of chronic illness,<sup>6</sup> improved patient satisfaction, and fewer hospitalizations and emergency room visits.<sup>7,8,9,10</sup>

**my family doctor cares** | **BC COLLEGE OF FAMILY PHYSICIANS**  
The home of family medicine

For more information visit [bccfp.bc.ca](http://bccfp.bc.ca)

# Celebrating the specialty of family medicine

As a family physician, you are a highly trained specialist with a unique and irreplaceable skillset. This is true no matter your practice setting. The BCCFP and BC Family Doctors came together in the spring to remind everyone that you are a specialist and that family physicians are unique health care professionals with accredited, evidence-based family medicine education and training.

We shared messaging on social media celebrating the many years of accredited, evidence-based education and training undertaken by family physicians. We let people know that not only are family physicians experts in generalism, they specialize in getting to know patients and their families over time, taking into account the whole person when delivering care.

We advocated on your behalf around the need for protection of family medicine/family practice terms and recognition of family physicians as specialists.

## Resources you can share

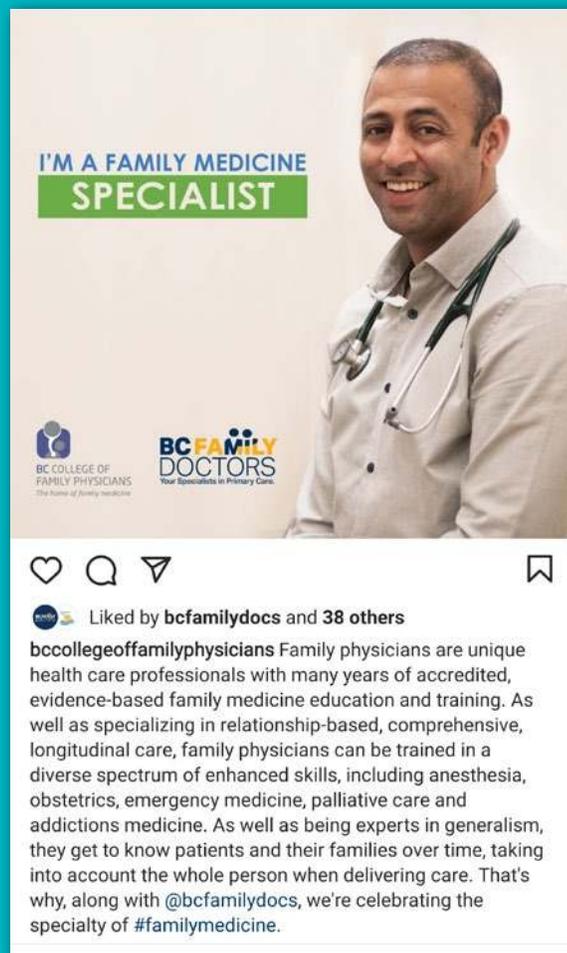
Join us in celebrating your specialty with these resources.

### Meeting handout

We created [this resource](#) to support your discussion with colleagues about the specialty of family medicine. The guide helps you spread the word that terms such as “general practitioner” or “primary care provider” do not reflect your training and the Certification in the College of Family Physicians of Canada (CCFP) special designation that lets patients know they are in qualified hands.

### Zoom background

[Download this Zoom background](#) to use in online meetings to let colleagues know you are a specialist.



Above: One of our campaign Instagram posts featuring Dr. Ashish Grover, Abbotsford-based family physician.

Left Dr. Jeanette Boyd using the "I'm a family medicine specialist" Zoom background.

# The stories of our 2021 award recipients

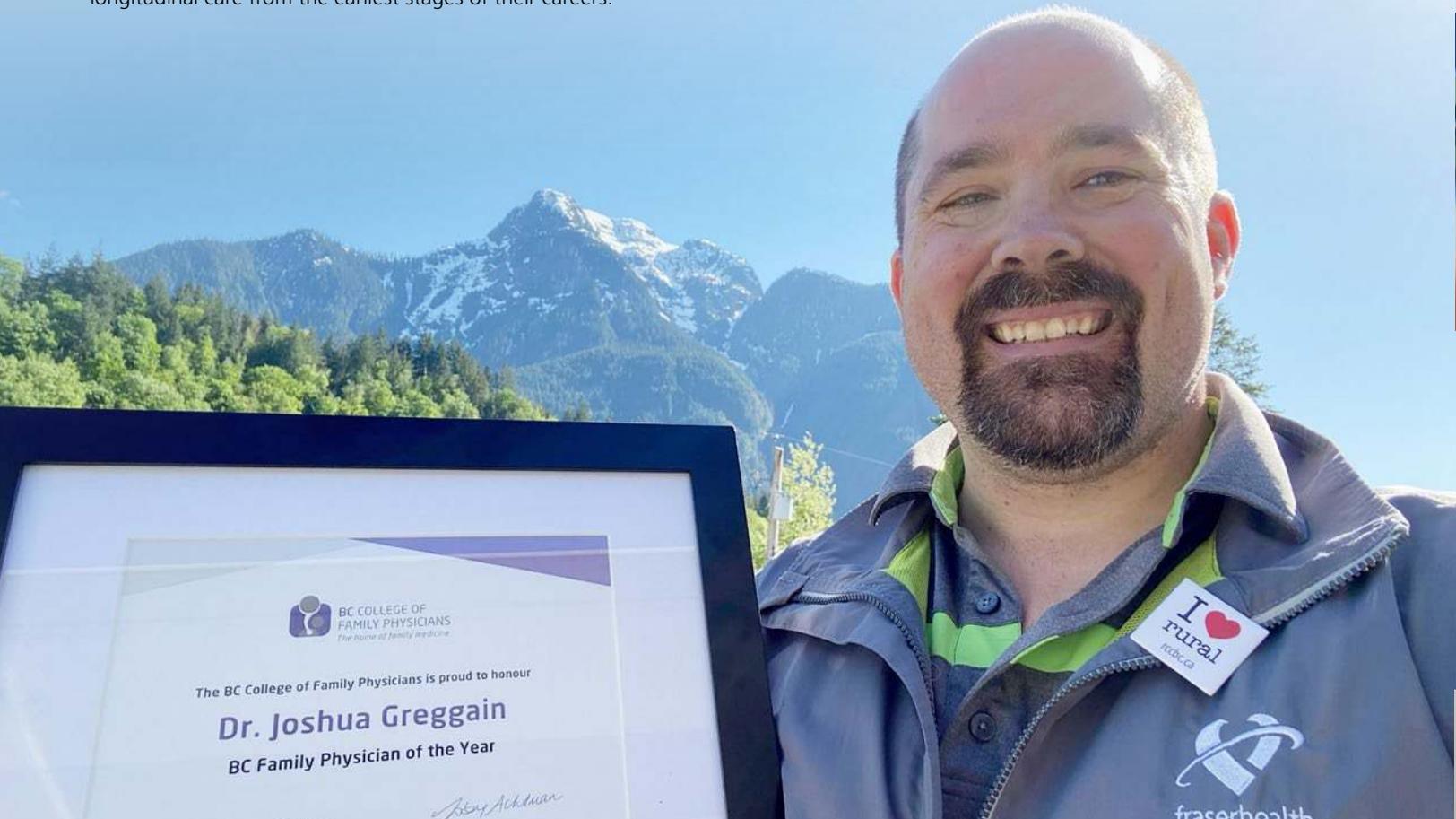
We received a record number of nominations for our annual awards this year, with almost 400 letters from patients and colleagues who wanted to recognize the outstanding work of family physicians across British Columbia. It was a real challenge to select just a few recipients from the many deserving people.

A common story emerged among the outstanding nominees: their commitment to delivering relationship-based, comprehensive, longitudinal care from the earliest stages of their careers.

## Dr. Joshua Greggain BC Family Physician of the Year

Dr. Greggain is recognized for his leadership and advocacy on behalf of the community of Hope, where he has been instrumental in increasing access to care for the town as well as for Indigenous communities in the surrounding areas.

[Read more.](#)



## Exceptional Teacher Honour recipients

Our Exceptional Teacher Honour recognizes and celebrates some of BC's dedicated community-based teachers and mentors.

Drs. Cecile Andreas, Benjamin Bauer, Annette Brower, Paul Dhillon, Inna Fadyeyeva, Carmen Goojha, Nicholas Graham, Marcus Greatheart, Janet Ip, Katrin Lovett, Birinder Narang, Cameron Ross, Sara Shahram, John Soles, Dalvinder Toor, Pieter Van Zyl, Reena Yu

## College Coin recipients

Our College Coin is designed to honour some of the unsung heroes in family medicine – the family physicians we admire for carrying out “good work.”

Drs. Carrie Armstrong, Stephanie Aung, Bonnie Bagdan, Ashley Bakker, Nicholas Baldwin, Julie Baxter, Jennifer Baxter, Colleen Black, Rupinder Brar, Ken Brown, Ava Butler,

Crystal Campbell, Meghan Chabot, Walter Chow, Gillaume Coetzee, Sarah Culkin, Kate Curtis, Sylvia Ducceschi, Michael Dumont, Fiona Duncan, Jaron Easterbrook, Janet Evans, Erin Ewing, Jessie Flear, Lisa Gaede, Mark Gelfer, Carmen Goojha, Tara Guthrie, Janine Hardial, Suzanne Hopkins, Kurt Jordan, Karin Kausky, Jim Ketch, Kelsey Kozoriz, Edward Krickan, Sasha Langille-Rowe, Trina Larsen-Soles, Sarah Lea, Howard Lee, Paul Mackey, Stephanie Mancini, Molly Marin, Patrick McCaffery, Rita McCracken, Sheena McKellar, Samantha McRae, Herman Mentz, Akber Mithani, Chris Morwood, Birinder Narang, Atma Persad, Danielle Pichie, Navid Pooyan, Melodie Prem-Smith, Emma Preston, Lloyd Purdy, Pal Randhawa, Harwood Reimer, Baldev Sanghera, Sara Shahram, Gretchen Snyman, Daren Spithoff, Darren Storrier, Michele Thomasse, Tracey Thorne, Joyce Tsang-Cheng, Shaun Van Zyl, Elizabeth Watters, Andrew Weaver, Monika Wojtera, Lawrence Yang, Alexander Yang, Reena Yu, Iram Yunus

**We accept nominations for our [College Coin](#) and [Exceptional Teacher Honour](#) year-round. Visit our website to nominate a colleague today.**

## My Family Doctor Award recipients



### Dr. Lauren Baerg

Dr. Baerg's nominator told us, "Dr. Baerg is one of the best listeners I have encountered in our healthcare system... Our community needs more doctors and role models like her."

[Read more.](#)



### Dr. Louise Corcoran

Dr. Corcoran's nominator told us, "I went to get my flu shot and, as she started asking other questions, she didn't like the way I looked so sent me immediately for tests. It turned out I had had a heart attack and was rushed to ER. I will be forever grateful that she took the time to treat me as a whole person."

[Read more.](#)



### Dr. Teresa Cordoni

Dr. Cordoni's nominator told us, "I am part of a very large, multi-generation family. Dr. Cordoni has always made each of us feel welcome, comfortable and, most of all, heard and safe in her trusted care."

[Read more.](#)



### Dr. Shu Fung

Dr. Fung Ho's nominator told us, "I feel really listened to. I feel he considers all aspects of my care. He has made a huge difference in how I view our medical system and I feel very blessed he has taken me as a patient."

[Read more.](#)



### Dr. Deon Van Rensburg

Dr. Van Rensburg's nominator told us, "He is such an asset to our community and has been a rock in my health care journey... as we have journeyed through challenging diagnoses for our children, he not only took care of our medical needs but held our hand through the emotional aspect of all of it."

[Read more.](#)



### Dr. Birinder Narang First Five Years of Practice Award

Dr. Narang has made a big impact in his first few years of practice, emerging as a trusted source of public health advice and information throughout the pandemic.

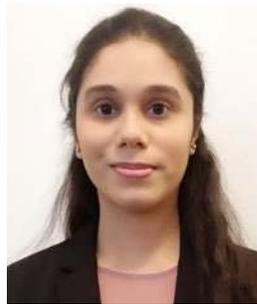
[Read more.](#)



### Dr. Jessica Luksts R2 Resident Award

Known for her warm, caring and professional manner and her communication skills, Dr. Luksts has made a positive impact on the lives of her co-residents and her patients.

[Read more.](#)



### Dr. Maheen Mujtaba R2 Resident Award

Dr. Mujtaba served as the first female resident lead for the International Medical Graduates (IMG) in the UBC Family Practice Residency Program.

[Read more.](#)



### Dr. Irfan Rajani R2 Resident Award

With a keen desire to engage with his community and improve the resident experience, Dr. Rajani has advocated for his colleagues through several leadership roles.

[Read more.](#)



### Dr. Taran Main Dr. Manoo and Jean Gurjar Award

Dr. Main's preceptors and attending physicians know him for his compassionate, calm and caring professionalism and his outstanding scholarship.

[Read more.](#)



### Dr. Mei Wen Dr. Manoo and Jean Gurjar Award

Dr. Mei Wen was inspired to enter family medicine after experiencing the kindness and knowledgeable reassurance of her family physician as a teenager.

[Read more.](#)

# A day dedicated to you: BC Family Doctor Day

It was our pleasure to celebrate the amazing impact of our members on May 19, BC Family Doctor Day. The day is our annual opportunity to recognize the work of more than 7,000 family doctors and residents who practise in communities across our province.

As part of the celebrations, Sarah McLachlan, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, Dr. Bonnie Henry, Tyler Motte (Vancouver Canucks), and other familiar faces shared their messages of appreciation for you in a special video. **Click the image below to watch the video.**



## In the news

Newspapers and radio stations across the province joined in the festivities by featuring stories of this year's BCCFP award recipients:

- [Burnaby doctor honoured with college award for exceptional work](#)
- [Celebrate BC Family Doctor Day on May 19](#)
- [Local doctors win awards: two Okanagan doctors win awards from BCCFP](#)
- [Longtime Hope physician Joshua Greggain wins award after being nominated by colleague](#)
- [Northern doctors receive prestigious awards](#)
- [North Van physician honoured with family doctor award](#)
- [Port Coquitlam doctor recognized for nearly 40 years of multigenerational family care](#)

## Family doctors are good for your health

Throughout May, we shared the message of celebration with the public through our "Family doctors are good for your health" digital campaign. Building on the success of last year's [My Family Doctor Cares](#) public advocacy campaign, our [campaign website](#) was updated with new messaging to let the public know that family physicians are experts in caring for patients within the full context of their life, resulting in better overall health outcomes and higher satisfaction with the health care system. We emphasized that an ongoing relationship with a family physician is best for a person's health and promoted the [Pathways Virtual Care Directory](#) to help match those seeking a family physician.

We ran a digital ad campaign across provincial news and health-related sites to drive people to the website. The ads were seen over 360,000 times and performed twice above the industry average when it came to receiving clicks, proving that British Columbians want to hear more about the benefits of having a family doctor.

Thank you to everyone who joined in this year's celebrations!



## Family doctors are good for your health

Your family doctor is an expert in caring for YOU. They get to know and care for you throughout your life, leading to better health outcomes.

[myfamilydoctorcares.ca](http://myfamilydoctorcares.ca)



BC COLLEGE OF  
FAMILY PHYSICIANS  
The home of family medicine

*Our digital ads let the public know why having a family doctor is best for their health.*

# Family physicians delivering culturally safe care



We have a lot of work to do to achieve culturally safe and equitable health care for all British Columbians, as detailed in the province's 2020 report *In Plain Sight: Addressing Indigenous-specific Racism and Discrimination in B.C. Health Care*.

It gave us hope this year to hear the many stories of family physicians who are forging the way in implementing culturally safe, anti-racist approaches to health care in communities throughout the province.

Here, **Dr. Michael Dumont**, family physician and medical director of Lu'ma Medical Centre, illustrates the ways in which you can work towards a culturally safe practice environment.

**Dr. Alexa Lesperance**, (featured on the cover of our Annual Report and our website homepage) tells her story as a resident at the UBC Indigenous Family Medicine Site and shares her hopes for the future.

**“Family physicians are in the best position to build relationships that will heal.”**

**Dr. Michael Dumont**

I am Anishinaabe (Marten clan) from Shawanaga First Nation and I also carry mixed-European ancestry. I practise family medicine on unceded Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh territory at Lu'ma Medical Centre and Musqueam Primary Care Clinic. At both sites, I am privileged to integrate Western and traditional Indigenous approaches to health in my work as a family physician.

I came into medicine through a series of discoveries about my family. My grandmother contracted tuberculosis early in her life and encountered multiple reactivations of the infection in her adult years. Shortly after my father was born, the TB spread to her kidneys, and she was transferred to an urban hospital where she consented to a nephrectomy. During the surgery, without her consent or prior knowledge, they removed her uterus. No explanation was given. This was part of a pattern in which Indigenous women were encouraged, coerced or forced into birth control or sterilization procedures — a practice that continues to this day.

Hearing this story for the first time during my undergraduate years shook my whole world; it made me realize how profoundly the racism embedded in our healthcare system had impacted my own story. I saw how powerful the role of a physician is and how much capacity we have not only to heal, but to harm. I felt an urgent sense of responsibility to do everything in my power to make the health care system safer for us as Indigenous people.

[Read more.](#)

*Above: Dr. Michael Dumont, family physician and medical director at Lu'ma Medical Centre.*



**“Growing up on reserve, I rarely encountered physicians, but always saw the need.”**

**Dr. Alexa Lesperance**

Boozhoo! My name is Alexa Lesperance I’m bear clan kwe originating from Whitefish Bay First Nation in Treaty #3 Northwestern Ontario and Rocky Bay First Nation located in the Robinson-Superior Treaty area.

My interest in family medicine began as a young girl living on reserve and volunteering at our health centre. Among the many barriers to health care for Indigenous people, the most obvious that I encountered was access. Growing up on reserve, I rarely encountered physicians, but always saw the need.

**[Read more.](#)**

*Above: Dr. Alexa Lesperance practising at Lu’ma Medical Centre.*

## **Read the *In Plain Sight* report**

The report *In Plain Sight: Addressing Indigenous-specific Racism and Discrimination in B.C. Health Care* was released by BC Minister of Health Adrian Dix and independent reviewer Dr. Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond (Aki-Kwe) in November 2020. The report illustrated that racism in health care was not just historical, it is ongoing. Among the key findings:

- 84% of Indigenous people who took part in the investigation reported experiencing discrimination in the health care system.
- Over half of the Indigenous health care workers who took part stated that they had personally experienced racism at work because of their Indigenous identity. This behaviour was most frequently exhibited by a colleague or fellow student (74%).

Reading and understanding this report is an essential opportunity for family physicians to come together and implement positive changes in health care that address the needs of Indigenous populations.

- [Read the summary report](#)
- [Read the full report](#)
- [Access recommended cultural safety and humility resources and activities](#)

# A new way to enjoy Dinner with Docs



Our Dinner with Docs events took on a new form this year, as we invited UBC medical students to enjoy informal conversations with experienced family physicians over evening Zoom sessions. Usually held in person over a shared meal, these events give students a chance to ask questions about the experience of being a family physician and the scope of their work. The virtual format proved popular, with over 200 students attending across the four event dates.

Family physicians shared their experience on a range of subjects, from working in West Africa, to entering residency while pregnant, to practising in a small rural town.

Attendee **Erin Flanagan** said, "This event exposed me to the breadth of practice that is available in family medicine... I had no idea a family doctor could practice endoscopy before tonight. It also made me seriously consider rural opportunities. I left feeling excited about family medicine."

"I had a fantastic time!" said student **Frank Chou**. "I've attended Dinner with Docs twice now, and each time has been so worthwhile. We inquired about diversities in practice, accounting and financial considerations, pros and cons of specific residency programs, and transition to practice. The insights were invaluable."

*Above: Students were split into small groups and met with different family physicians throughout the 90 minutes.*

**Dr. Edward Chien** shared his advice with students at the event, "The world is your oyster if you become a family physician. You create your own adventure and decide how much or how little you want to work. You decide how diverse or how narrow you want your scope of practice to be... it is truly a rewarding career knowing you make a difference in so many people's lives."

Thank you to the 31 diverse, energetic family physicians from across the province who helped make this event a success: Drs. Terri Aldred, Katherine Bell, Jeanette Boyd, James Card, Natalie Chan, Edward Chien, Marjorie Docherty, Fahreen Dossa, Michael Dumont, Rebekah Eatmon, Janet Evans, Carolyn Feeley, Janine Hardial, Boris Herriguez, Dan Horvat, Tim Hsia, Jason Kason, Jim Ketch, Aryn Khan, George Ko, Shawna Koehle, Jeanne Mace, David May, Jennifer Meisner, Adrian Morris, Sari Raber, Gordon Stahl, Nicola Tam, Michelle Thomasse, Serena Verma, and Vincent Wong.

**"The world is your oyster if you become a family physician."**

# Residents shaping their communities

Family physicians get to know and support their local communities from the earliest stages of their career. Family medicine residents quickly learn that to deliver comprehensive care for patients, they must understand the context in which patients live and work – and that family physicians are able to address some of the social determinants that impact the community's health.

**Drs. Tanya Dhami** and **Rohit Vijh** are just two examples of the many stories we heard this year of family medicine residents who are already making a positive difference in their communities.



**“If you get involved in local community, you can better challenge health issues at their core.”**

**Dr. Tanya Dhami**

I grew up in Surrey and graduated from the UBC Surrey-South Fraser Family Medicine Residency Program in July. Staying local has allowed me to continue my community involvement throughout my early career.

I am South Asian in ethnicity, but when I was counselling patients on diet, I realized I wasn't familiar with the nutrition and calorie content of South Asian food. Through further experience, I learned there is insufficient representation of South Asian foods in diabetes counselling. We have a large South Asian population in the Lower Mainland and prevalence of diabetes is significantly higher in this community than in the general population. Three other residents and I wanted to do something that transcended the cultural and language barriers to address this shortcoming.

[Read more.](#)



**“To create meaningful public health policies, you need to know what it's like to build relationships with people in the community.”**

**Dr. Rohit Vijh**

I am a resident at UBC in the Public Health and Preventative Medicine program in Surrey, with family medicine training included in my program. My passion for public health and medicine began during my undergraduate training at McGill, where I started working in epidemiology and public health as it relates to HIV. I worked with marginalized populations and the LGBT community, which was very impactful, especially as I identify with that community.

To really understand how to care for a community and a population in a broader sense, you need to know what it's like to be a provider of direct patient care. That's why family physicians make for great public health officials.

During the pandemic, public health residents were brought into the front-line response.

[Read more.](#)

# Students delivering care through connection

A group of UBC medical students is bringing companionship to older residents in isolated communities, proving that relationship-based care allows you to make a positive difference from the earliest stages of a family medicine career.

The Medical Students Supporting Older Adults (MSSOA) program, led by Dr. Martha Spencer (geriatrician/internist), matches UBC medical student volunteers with older adults living around the province. Students hold regular phone calls

with their matches to lend a friendly ear in what has been an especially difficult time for this priority population.

Students **Salina Kung**, co-founder of MSSOA, and **Leilynaz Malekafzali**, co-lead of MSSOA, tell us more about the program and their hopes for a future in family medicine.



**“Family medicine offers the opportunity to connect with and care for diverse groups of patients.”**

**Leilynaz Malekafzali**

“I started this initiative with Dr. Martha Spencer and fourth-year medical student, Vivienne Beard,” said Salina. “At first, we were just a few students calling a few older adults. We received some amazing feedback from our program in Vancouver – the older adults really enjoyed having someone check in with them every so often. We’ve now expanded to around 50 student volunteers and 60 older adults, who were referred to the program through their physicians. We also partnered with Rai Reed, Elderly Services Nurse Consultant with Northern Health, who is recruiting older adults living independently or in assisted living. The calls are very flexible and it’s been really nice to make connections. As a medical student, it’s so special because these are opportunities to speak with older adults in the community in this kind of setting.”

Leilynaz agreed, “It’s been wonderful to be able to contribute to the mental health of older adults. COVID-19 has caused a lot of anxiety and depression among older populations. The program has been a great opportunity for them to make connections and talk about their daily lives, while medical students get to hear their wisdom and experience. We’ve been able to develop an understanding of the social determinants of health and gain skills in communicating with seniors, who may have sensory or cognitive issues and complex medical needs, as well as language differences.”

[Read more.](#)

# Strategic Plan 2021-2024

In January, we launched a member survey to learn more about what’s important to you and how you would like us to support family physicians over the coming years. Thank you to all who participated in this important process. Your feedback was incorporated into our new Strategic Plan 2021-2024, detailed here.

**Vision** Inspired family physicians providing and supporting equitable, culturally safe, longitudinal care, for all British Columbians.

**Mission** We are the heart of family medicine in BC, providing leadership, support, advocacy, and education.

**Strategic Priorities**

- Advocate for relationship-based, comprehensive, longitudinal family medicine.**
  - Develop relationships with allies and external stakeholders to ensure the voice of family physicians is represented at relevant health care tables.
  - Protect the term of “family physician” in BC and increase the understanding of the unique value of family physicians within government and external stakeholders.
  - Support and enable advocacy efforts by promoting the unique role and value of family physicians through stories of impact/strategic communications.
- Support, acknowledge, and celebrate family physicians through all stages of their careers.**
  - Nurture the future of family medicine by providing supports to medical students, residents, and family physicians in their first five years of practice.
  - Build strong peer relationships amongst family physicians by supporting connections and networking across our membership.
  - Celebrate family physicians through stories of impact and acknowledgment.
- Advocate for culturally safe health care and demonstrate anti-racist approaches to address health equity.**
  - Meet BCCFP’s commitments within the [Declaration of Commitment to Cultural Safety and Humility](#) by forging and strengthening partnerships with relevant stakeholders.
  - Build awareness and understanding of health equity and what it means to be anti-racist.
  - Embed cultural safety and humility and anti-racism throughout the BCCFP’s work.

# Join us on Instagram

We are now on Instagram! Follow us at [@bccollegeoffamilyphysicians](https://www.instagram.com/bccollegeoffamilyphysicians)

We share stories from members around the province, celebrate the work of family physicians, highlight the value of family medicine, and give you insight into your colleagues' activities.

## Help build our community

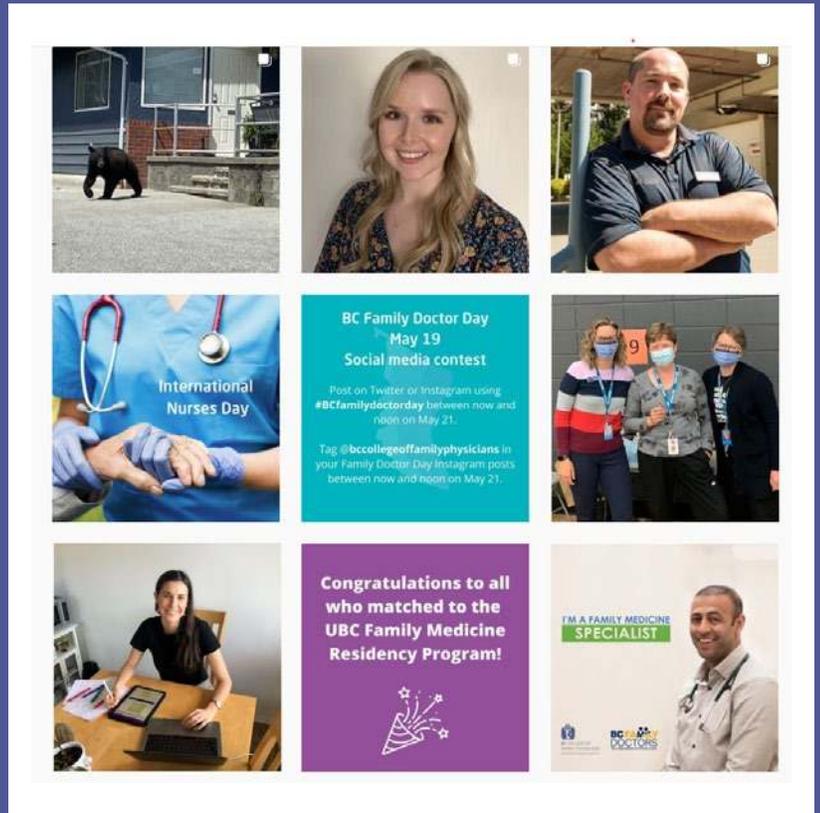
Share your photos and stories with us, whether they're from a typical day at work or an example of how you find balance.

Ideas include:

- selfies or videos of your workday
- stories about your community involvement
- photos and stories of your team in action
- photos and stories of you working with students and residents

Please send your photos and captions to [office@bccfp.bc.ca](mailto:office@bccfp.bc.ca) or tag us in your Instagram posts.

We can't wait to connect.



Family medicine residents David and Shikha shared photos from their time at Richmond Hospital.



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