

# 2019/ 2020

## ANNUAL REPORT

my  
family  
doctor  
cares



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

# President's Message

## "My Family Doctor Cares."



*My Family Doctor Cares.* That is the message we chose for the public campaign we launched this year. It encompasses what our patients most value in their family physician, and what drew us all into the profession of family medicine. When the year began, we could not anticipate the extent to which family physicians would need to rise to the challenge of addressing the evolving care needs of British Columbians during the COVID-19 pandemic.

I am so grateful and proud to be working alongside family physicians through this critical period. There is still so much we don't know about how the pandemic is going to impact the wellness of the communities we serve, but what is known is the incredible capacity of family physicians to adapt and respond to this pandemic and other public health emergencies. As family physicians, we are innovative collaborators and unsung heroes on the frontlines. Our ongoing training and lifelong learning make us adept at absorbing information and implementing newly acquired knowledge in our practice. Our previous experiences have helped us develop a resilience that is now invaluable in the face of a long-term challenge.

Because of how much you care, many of you have made significant changes to clinic procedures, committing extra hours each day to maximizing safety for patients and colleagues. You have taken on new technologies, tackled the challenges presented by the need for PPE, and adjusted your home and family life to new ways of working. More importantly, you have continued to provide high-quality, patient and family-centred care despite these challenges.

I am not surprised by any of these qualities you have shown, but I am profoundly grateful and inspired.

Know that the patient-centred, holistic care you deliver has had an impact on the health and wellbeing of British

Columbians – now and in the future. In moments of difficulty, remember that our public polling shows that 90% of British Columbians understand and value the role their family physician plays in their overall health. Remember the spring and summer evenings where, at 7:00 pm each day, thousands took to their windows, balconies, gardens and driveways to cheer and give thanks for health care workers. British Columbians know how much you care.

In this Annual Report, we celebrate all the ways in which you have cared for your patients and communities this year – from advocating for better access to family physicians, to improving food security, to quickly implementing virtual care, and more.

We also highlight how family physicians are attending, with renewed urgency, to issues related to systemic racism. The BCCFP signed the BC First Nations Health Authority (FNHA) Declaration of Commitment to Cultural Safety and Humility last November, and our Cultural Safety and Humility Committee continues to identify actions we must take to pursue active anti-racism. Please view the resources provided in this report and join us in this commitment.

Through all your hard work, it is important that you also take time to care for yourselves and your families. I hope that the wellness resources we provide in this report will support you in staying resilient.

Thank you to the BCCFP Board of Directors and to my family physician colleagues across the province for all that you do for family medicine.

**Dr. Jeanette Boyd, BSc, MD, CCFP, FCFP**  
President

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"I am not surprised by any of these qualities you have shown, but I am newly grateful and inspired."

# Executive Director's Message

## Together towards a better future



"Stories about the significant impact family physicians have on the lives of individuals and communities inspire me to think about what more our organization can do to sustain and advance your work."

This year, we took on a major advocacy effort to elevate the voices of family physicians and promote the value of family medicine to public and government.

Our My Family Doctor Cares campaign was new territory for us. As you will see in this report, the reach of the campaign exceeded our expectations. We were fortunate to be in a position to adapt our campaign at the onset of the pandemic to let British Columbians know that family physicians continue to be here for them, and to encourage patients to maintain their health through an ongoing relationship with their family physician. We intend to continue the momentum of the campaign. We need to influence the future of primary care in British Columbia by participating in discussions with the provincial government.

Last November, we signed a declaration of commitment to cultural safety and humility with the BC First Nations Health Authority (FNHA). We know this is just the beginning of the work we need to do to bridge the gaps in Indigenous health care and support the dismantling of systemic racism. It has been a privilege to be involved in the work of our Cultural Safety and Humility Committee and to engage in difficult, but critical, conversations and self-reflection exercises. I encourage you to commit to your own learning and action on this subject, beginning with these [cultural safety and humility resources](#).

One of my favourite times of the year is reading through the nominations for the My Family Doctor Award and Awards of Excellence, and this year we had hundreds of fantastic nominations. Hearing personal stories about the significant impact family physicians have on the lives of individuals and communities motivates and inspires me to think about what more our organization can do to sustain and advance your work.

We are nearing the end of our current [Strategic Plan](#). It is amazing to reflect on how much has changed since our plan began in 2017. As we embrace this opportunity to set new goals for our organization, we remain committed to supporting you through every stage of your career.

Thank you for all that you do.

**Toby Achtman, MHA, CAE**  
Executive Director  
BC College of Family Physicians

### BCCFP BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2019/2020

- Dr. Anthon Meyer (President, Nov 2019 to Mar 2020)
- Dr. Jeanette Boyd (President, April 2020 to Oct 2020)
- Dr. Marjorie Docherty (Vice President)
- Dr. Christine Singh (Treasurer)
- Dr. Justine Spencer (Secretary)
- Dr. Terri Aldred
- Dr. Katherine Bell

- Dr. Brenda Hardie
- Dr. Dan Horvat
- Dr. Paul Mackey
- Dr. David May
- Dr. Alicia Pawluk
- Dr. Sean Wachtel

# My Family Doctor Cares Campaign

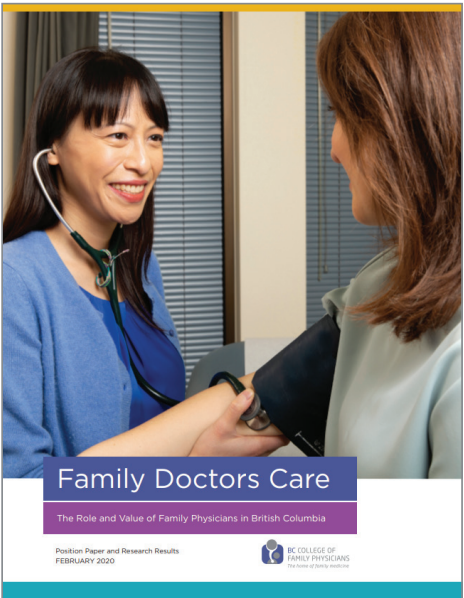


Your efforts helped bring the campaign to life.

Above: Our TV public service announcements had a total reach of over 26 million viewers.

Above right: Our Position Paper highlights the role and value of family physicians in British Columbia.

Right: We were pleased to represent family medicine and promote our campaign at this year's BC Patient Safety and Quality Council Quality Forum.



Family Doctors Care

The Role and Value of Family Physicians in British Columbia

Position Paper and Research Results  
FEBRUARY 2020

### GOVERNMENT ADVOCACY

We invited government to begin a conversation that includes patients and family physicians on how to best meet the needs of British Columbians. Our position paper, [Family Doctors Care: The Role and Value of Family Physicians in British Columbia](#), summarizes our research findings and lets government know that family physicians feel undervalued in the current system.

In February, we introduced our MLA letter-writing campaign to advocate for improved access to family physicians for all British Columbians. Nearly 900 people wrote to their MLAs through our online submission tool in only five weeks.

While our letter-writing campaign and Day at the Legislature was postponed due to the pandemic, we intend to build on our work to date and reschedule these initiatives.

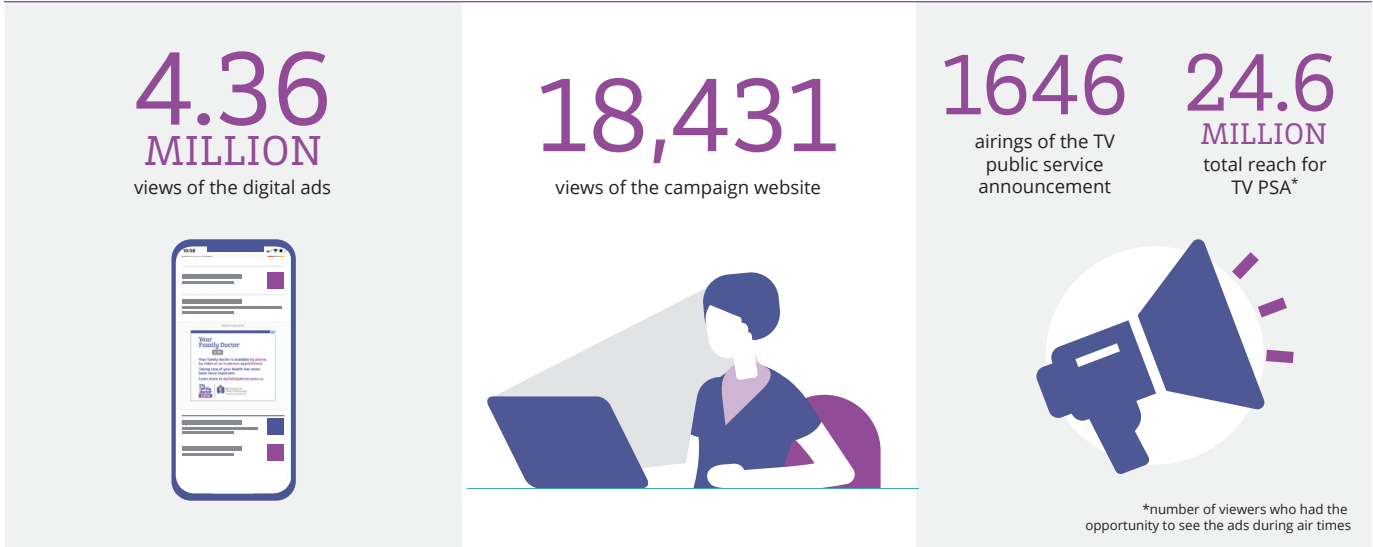


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CAMPAIGN SUCCESSES

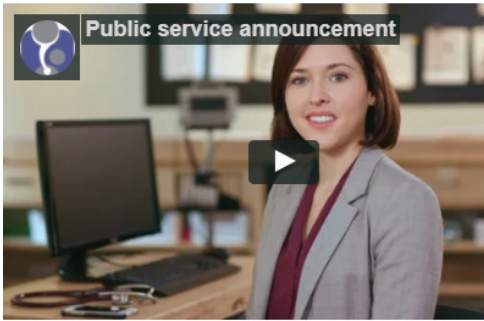
The campaign performed well above industry averages across all metrics. Highlights include:



A full summary of the My Family Doctor Cares campaign can be viewed [here](#), including more detailed insights into the campaign metrics.

CAMPAIGN RELAUNCH

Our revised PSA lets British Columbians know their family physician is available by phone, video and in-person appointments.



We adapted the campaign in April with new messaging in response to the impact of COVID-19. The revised campaign highlighted that that “your family doctor is in” – whether through phone, virtual, or in-person appointment – and that the public should continue to seek care for new and existing conditions. We took the message directly to British Columbians through our television [public service announcement](#), [digital ads](#) and [campaign website](#).

The [patient-oriented video](#) let patients know what to expect from a virtual appointment, while this [infographic poster](#) helped them prepare to make the most of their appointment.

CAMPAIGN RESOURCES STILL AVAILABLE

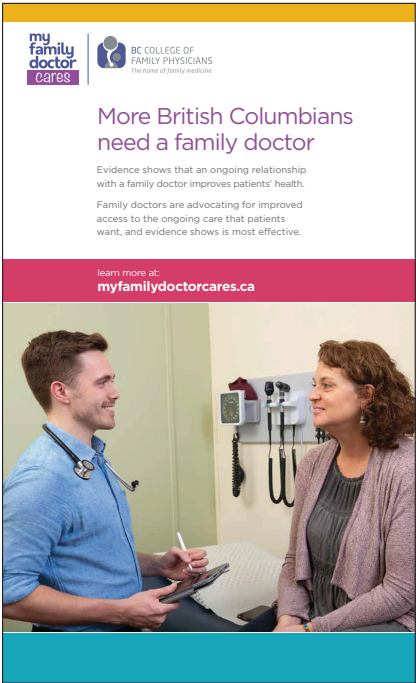
The [My Family Doctor Cares](#) website continues to be accessible and provides patients with useful advice about accessing care throughout the pandemic, as well as information demonstrating the importance of comprehensive, longitudinal care from a family doctor.

Join us in continuing to use the [#MyFamilyDoctorCares](#) hashtag on social media.

Thank you to all of you who have added your unique and invaluable voices to the My Family Doctor Cares campaign.

Caring... for the future of family medicine

Right: Many of you ordered copies of our campaign posters to display in your clinics.



We recognize and appreciate that so many of you advocated for family medicine this year, both as part of the My Family Doctor Cares campaign and through your own unique initiatives.

Your voice is vital for securing a strong future for family medicine. We recognize and appreciate that so many of you many advocated for family medicine this year, both as part of the My Family Doctor Cares campaign and through your own unique initiatives.

Here are just a few of the creative ways you made family physicians heard:

**Shoreline Medical** in Sidney shared the My Family Doctor Cares link on their website and posted on Facebook encouraging patients to join in with advocating to government.

**Dr. Jessica Otte**, a Nanaimo-based family physician, was one of the first to use our online tool to write to her MLA advocating for improved access to family physicians. Dr. Otte was active on social media, supporting the campaign and encouraging others to write to their MLAs.

**Dr. Goldis Mitra** wrote an opinion piece for *The Tyee* highlighting the availability of family physicians through virtual care, while a number of family physicians contributed to *The Tyee's six-part series on the future of primary care*.

**Dr. Jennifer Rogerson** ordered My Family Doctor Cares stickers to give out at her clinic in Delta, helping spread the word about our campaign and recruiting patients as ambassadors for family medicine.

**Helmcken Cove Family Practice** shared our resource “[Preparing for your video or phone appointment with your family doctor](#)” on their website, along with our public service announcement video and link to the campaign website, encouraging patients to continue their appointments.

Hundreds of you wrote to your MLA advocating for improved access to family physicians for British Columbians and encouraging the government to open a dialogue on the subject.

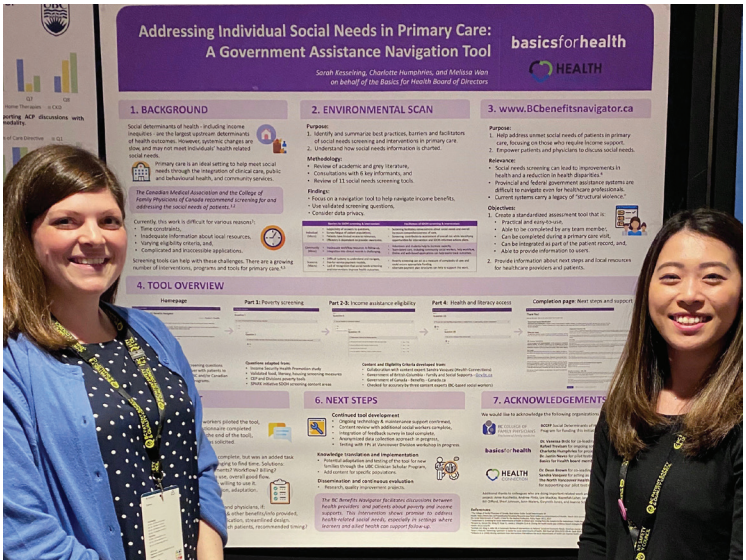
**FAMILY MEDICINE ADVOCATE AWARD**  
We know that many of you commit countless hours striving to advance family medicine for the benefit of all. In recognition of these efforts, we created the new **Family Medicine Advocate Award**.

This annual award recognizes a family physician who advocates for

the importance of longitudinal, comprehensive family practice. It is designed to honour someone who demonstrates a commitment to social justice, evidence-informed care, collaborative relationships, reflective leadership and/or physician wellness. Turn to **page 7** to read about this year’s recipient, **Dr. Lawrence Yang**.



# Caring... for our communities



Many family physicians recognize that it is difficult to treat the immediate health concerns of their patients without addressing in some way the underlying social conditions that give rise to poor health.

Top left: Sarah Kesselring and Melissa Wan, Basics for Health board members, presented on the BC Benefits Navigator project and pilot study findings at the BCPSQC Quality Forum.

Top right: Dr. Ilona Hale led the Kimberley Food Recovery Program.

Attention to the social determinants of health (SDH) is integral to family medicine and population health.

We know the profound impact that the social determinants of health have on the health and wellness of our patients. A [2009 report](#) found that socio-economic factors account for fully 50% of all health outcomes in Canada.

Many family physicians recognize that it is difficult to treat the immediate health concerns of their patients without addressing in some way the underlying social conditions that give rise to poor health.

In 2019, the BCCFP awarded eight one-time grants of \$5,000 to enable members to create resources or initiate projects in their communities that could help BC family physicians address the SDH.

Projects took place in both rural and urban areas of the province and addressed different populations and their needs, from new mothers on a small island to Indigenous people living in downtown Vancouver. A spectrum of

care providers brought their expertise and perspectives to the projects.

Across the summaries of these projects, you will see a clear pattern in the importance and benefit of caring for the whole person, taking into consideration their mental health, social connectedness, economic well-being and access to basic needs.

We hope you enjoy reading about these projects and that this report stimulates action to address the SDH in your practice.

[Read the report.](#)



# Caring... for patients and colleagues

Nearly 300 British Columbians took the time to nominate family physicians from across the province for the My Family Doctor Award.

The five recipients were:

- Dr. Rachel Collins, Agassiz
- Dr. Kalen Geddes, Prince George
- Dr. Peter Lutsky, Vancouver
- Dr. Patricia Olsen, Victoria
- Dr. Mark Szykaruk, Grand Forks

[Read about the My Family Doctor Award recipients.](#)

Our award recipients were also celebrated in provincial and local media as part of [BC Family Doctor Day](#) on May 19. [Find the coverage here.](#)

## AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE



Our BC Family Physician of the Year is [Dr. Tahmeena Ali](#) (pictured above). Dr. Ali is recognized for her leadership, teaching, research and patient advocacy, particularly with regard to priority populations. She has an active interest in increasing knowledge and awareness around adverse childhood events (ACEs).

[Dr. Lawrence Yang](#) received the Family Medicine Advocate Award, new for 2020.

[Dr. Alyssa Cantarutti](#) received the First Five Years of Practice Award.

Our Resident Leadership Award recipient was [Dr. Rebekah Eatmon R2 \(UBC\)](#). Hear more from Dr. Eatmon on [page 8](#).

[Dr. Jessica Briggs R1](#) and [Dr. Anmol Lamba R2](#) received the Dr. Manoo and Jean Gurjar Award.

[Read more about our award recipients here.](#)

## COLLEGE COIN RECIPIENTS

Drs. Lester Alec, Bob Bluman, Joelle Bradley, Raul Carvelho, Robert Dale, Rummy Dosanjh, Ed Dubland, Nicole Ebert, Renee Fernandez, Marcia Fukunaga, Lauren Galbraith, Janet Green, Montana Halliday, Bonnie Henry, Brenda Huff, Gunther Klein, Daniel Landry, Nirvair Levitt, Christina Liciu, James Mackenzie, David May, Herman Mentz, Birinder Narang, Christie Newton, Dan Pare, Derek Poteryko, Nitasha Puri, Nazanin Rahnema, Ian Scott, Nardia Strydom, Alex van Duyvendyk, Tandi Wilkinson, Kristin Zahynacz, Maryam Zeineddin

## EXCEPTIONAL TEACHER HONOUR RECIPIENTS

Drs. Shadan Ashrafi, Glen Bowlsby, Ken Brown, Matthew Chedrawe, Suze Donaldson, David Dueckman, Renee Hall, Jill Harrop, Evaristus Idanwekhai, Jeff Kornelsen, Mark Lawrie, Heather Leyen, Melanie Madill, Anthon Meyer, John Pawlovich, Natasha Rafo, Launette Rieb, Jennifer Roger, Helia Shariati, Greg Siren, Louise Van Zyl, Maryam Vaseghi-Shanjani, Jean Warneboldt

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



# Caring... for cultural safety

The BCCFP was proud to sign the [BC First Nations Health Authority \(FNHA\) Declaration of Commitment to Cultural Safety and Humility](#) on November 1, 2019. Our efforts towards cultural humility and anti-racism are just beginning. We are committed to taking further action in the immediate and long-term future.

We know that it can be difficult to identify what we can do as individuals to combat racism. We spoke to Dr. Rebekah Eatmon to hear her thoughts and guidance. We hope you will join us in reflecting on this advice, engaging with the further resources we provide here, and continuing to work towards health equity and the delivery of culturally safe care for the benefit of all British Columbians.



**Dr. Rebekah Eatmon** completed her Doctor of Medicine at the University of British Columbia (UBC) in 2018 and is now a Family Medicine Resident at the Vancouver Indigenous Site. She is a facilitator with the UBC 23-24 Indigenous Cultural Safety curriculum; an advisor on the UBC Faculty of Medicine Indigenous Student Engagement Pathways Working Group; and acts as co-lead on the Indigenous Voice Project. She is the recipient of the 2020 BCCFP Resident Leadership Award.

We are all on a personal journey of cultural humility. Some have already taken the time to learn and have reached a plateau. Some think racism is less of an issue than in previous decades. Others are continuously self-reflective and think about how we can keep pushing for equality in the healthcare system – this is the mentality I hope for.

So, what more do we as family physicians need to do?

We need to start having difficult discussions about racism and our own biases. There are times in residency when I heard staff or other residents make uncomfortable comments regarding Indigenous patients. On a rotation earlier this year, I admitted a First Nations patient with biliary sepsis who presented the previous week with abdominal pain. She was not treated for her pain by the previous physician. Is it my role to call out the initial physician? I did bring it up with my staff. If you are non-Indigenous and you witness a peer doing something you think is a microaggression, approach that person and initiate a respectful conversation

Creating a safe space for people to talk about things beyond the immediate health concern will help them with their overall health significantly.

about it. We need to have the confidence to speak up without putting the onus on the Indigenous or racialized person to raise the issue first.

We need to purposefully make room for Indigenous voices in our practices and in our health care system. At UBC, I help facilitate the UBC 23-24 curriculum. We lead groups of health science students in discussions about our biases – which we all have – and share ideas on how we can tackle systemic racism. I remember a time when a student shared that she had always thought maybe Indigenous people did not want to be in leadership positions in the health care system. Through our discussions, we uncovered that, in fact, Indigenous people have rarely been encouraged or given space to take on these roles. These breakthroughs can only come about through respectful discussion in which we allow ourselves to be vulnerable. Only once we acknowledge the underlying problem can we begin to address the lack of Indigenous voices at the higher levels of our systems.

Most of all, we need to take the time to hear people’s stories. My mantra is “everyone has a story.” When I meet with patients and try to sort out all the different concerns they might have, I think “what is the underlying story behind this?” But it is not possible to properly care for an Indigenous patient without acknowledging that racism may well be a part of their story. While it is uncomfortable to hear about trauma, or negative health care experiences, it’s important that we do it. One of my preceptors, Dr. Michael Dumont, shared with me his advice that “the relationship

is the intervention.” Creating a safe space for people to talk about things beyond the immediate health concern will help them with their overall health significantly.

Building a relationship with an Indigenous patient doesn’t have to be uncomfortable. Many Indigenous people love to laugh. I always follow the patient’s lead, and a lot of times, even after a heavy conversation, we’ll have some great laughs. Take cues from the person in front of you and apply trauma-informed care to help ease into a relationship. You never know what good might come from it.

Lots of great work has been done in the past decade or two to improve the way Indigenous people and the health care system interact. There are many people in family medicine who are self-reflective and work hard to improve equality and create a safe, welcoming environment for everyone. We can now build on these efforts.

Let’s keep going.

*Dr. Rebekah Eatmon, UBC MD graduate and family practice resident*

## FURTHER READING AND RESOURCES

Visit the [health equity section of the BCCFP website](#) for further reading and activities to support you in practising cultural humility and anti-racism.

We continue to develop our resources. Please contact us with any suggested additions.

# Caring... during COVID-19

The BCCFP recognizes the extraordinary efforts of BC's family physicians in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic. You have adapted quickly to providing virtual care and making your clinics safe for in-person appointments while delivering reassuring information to your patients.

We adapted our [My Family Doctor Cares](#) campaign to let British Columbians know that their family physician continues to be here for them. You can direct your community to this website to find guidance on preparing for a virtual appointment and what to do if COVID-19 symptoms develop.

At the beginning of April, we wrote to Dr. Bonnie Henry to ask that she help us inform British Columbians that family physicians are still here for them. Dr. Henry subsequently issued a message in her daily press briefing encouraging the public not to neglect their health and to continue seeking care from their family physician.

We have created and curated some resources to support you.

## COVID-19 RESOURCE DIRECTORY

We compile links to the most up-to-date COVID-19 information for the public and clinical guidance for family physicians at [www.bccfp.bc.ca/covid-19/](http://www.bccfp.bc.ca/covid-19/)

## COVID-19 SIMPLE MESSAGES

We created a COVID-19 'simple messages' infographic for family physicians to share with patients and the public. [View and download the infographic here](#). This can be printed or shared online.

## PREPARING FOR A VIRTUAL APPOINTMENT

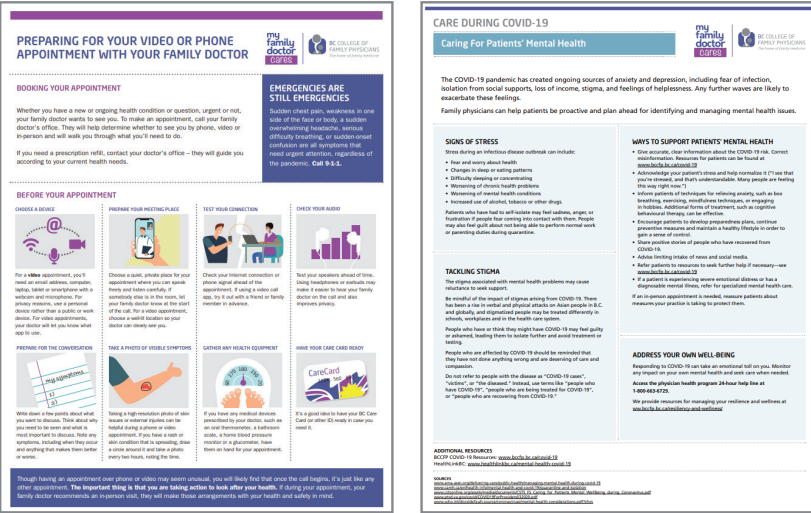
Our one-page infographic on [“Preparing for your video or phone appointment with your family doctor”](#) can be shared with patients on your clinic website, on social media, or emailed to patients ahead of their appointment.

## RESOURCES TO SUPPORT YOU IN CARING FOR PRIORITY POPULATIONS

These one-pagers provide guidance, reminders and links to trusted resources relevant to caring for priority populations throughout the pandemic.

- [Anticipatory Guidance for Patients with Chronic Disease](#)
- [Caring for Children and Teens' Mental Health](#)
- [Caring for Older Patients](#)
- [Caring for Patients' Mental Health](#)
- [Caring for Patients Who Suffer Chronic Pain](#)
- [Caring for Patients Who Use Substances](#)
- [Identifying and Addressing Intimate Partner Violence](#)
- [Serious Illness Conversations with Patients at High Risk From COVID-19](#)

Below: Our one-pagers provide guidance on caring for priority populations throughout the pandemic. Click on the images to access the resource.



Right:  
Dr. Derek  
Poteryko and  
Dr. Marcia  
Fukunaga.

## How we responded to the COVID-19 pandemic

—by Dr. Derek Poteryko

I've been a full-service family physician for 25 years and I'm proud to be a part of the closely knit medical community in Nanaimo.

As the medical director of community health, I am part of a community think tank comprised of family physicians and other specialists. When we met in February, we realized that the community was already becoming worried about COVID-19 and that we had a role to play in addressing this. [Dr. Marcia Fukunaga](#) had the idea that we should do something to help inform the public and alleviate anxiety. That's where the idea for our [Walk and Talk with Docs video series](#) was born. We created informational videos interviewing different health professionals and shared them through Twitter and YouTube, and they were then featured on local media.

Phone consultations have been a powerful way to reach patients. As a family physician, I know my patient and the patient knows me. Because of this trust, you can achieve a lot of good

medicine in a 20-minute phone call – that's the neat thing about relational medicine.

As an example, when one of our patients, a Snuneymuxw Elder, was hospitalized, he was unable to connect with his community because of the strict no-visitor policy. When I walked into his room, the smile of recognition on his face spoke volumes about what relational continuity can do to heal. We were able to reconnect him with his family using FaceTime on my phone because we also take care of his grandchildren. Knowing that you can improve a patient's health and well-being just through your relationship is a priceless aspect of family medicine.

I think family physicians' response to the pandemic has helped make family medicine more efficient, caring and connected. By letting science and compassionate medicine lead the way, family medicine has been and will continue to be a leader in this pandemic.

*Dr. Derek Poteryko is a family physician and the medical director of community health in Nanaimo.*



# Caring... for ourselves and each other

With so much of your energy focused on caring for your patients, it can be easy to overlook caring for yourself and your colleagues.

If you or a loved one is struggling, contact the [Physician Health Program](#) 24-hour help line: 1-800-663-6729.

Family physicians and other health professionals face unique challenges that affect mental resilience and wellness. These resources, created in response to the COVID-19 pandemic are also applicable in the everyday work of family physicians.

We all have different strategies to address stress and build resilience, both for ourselves and for those we care for. The resources below are some tools that you may wish to incorporate into your practice.

Please also refer to our website for additional [pandemic-related resources](#).

We hope you will find these resources helpful. If you know of other resources that could help support family physicians, please let us know.

## [ABC123 PSYCHOLOGICAL FIRST AID TOOL](#)

This memory aid and tool provides techniques to reduce symptoms of acute anxiety and other emotional distress. Become familiar with using these techniques to help with your own stress as well as teach patients how and when to use the techniques appropriately.

## [STAYING WELL WHILE WORKING FROM HOME](#)

This infographic provides tips on how to set routines and boundaries that help you care for yourself and stay productive while you operate your practice from home.

## [RECOGNIZING AND PREVENTING BURNOUT DURING A PANDEMIC](#)

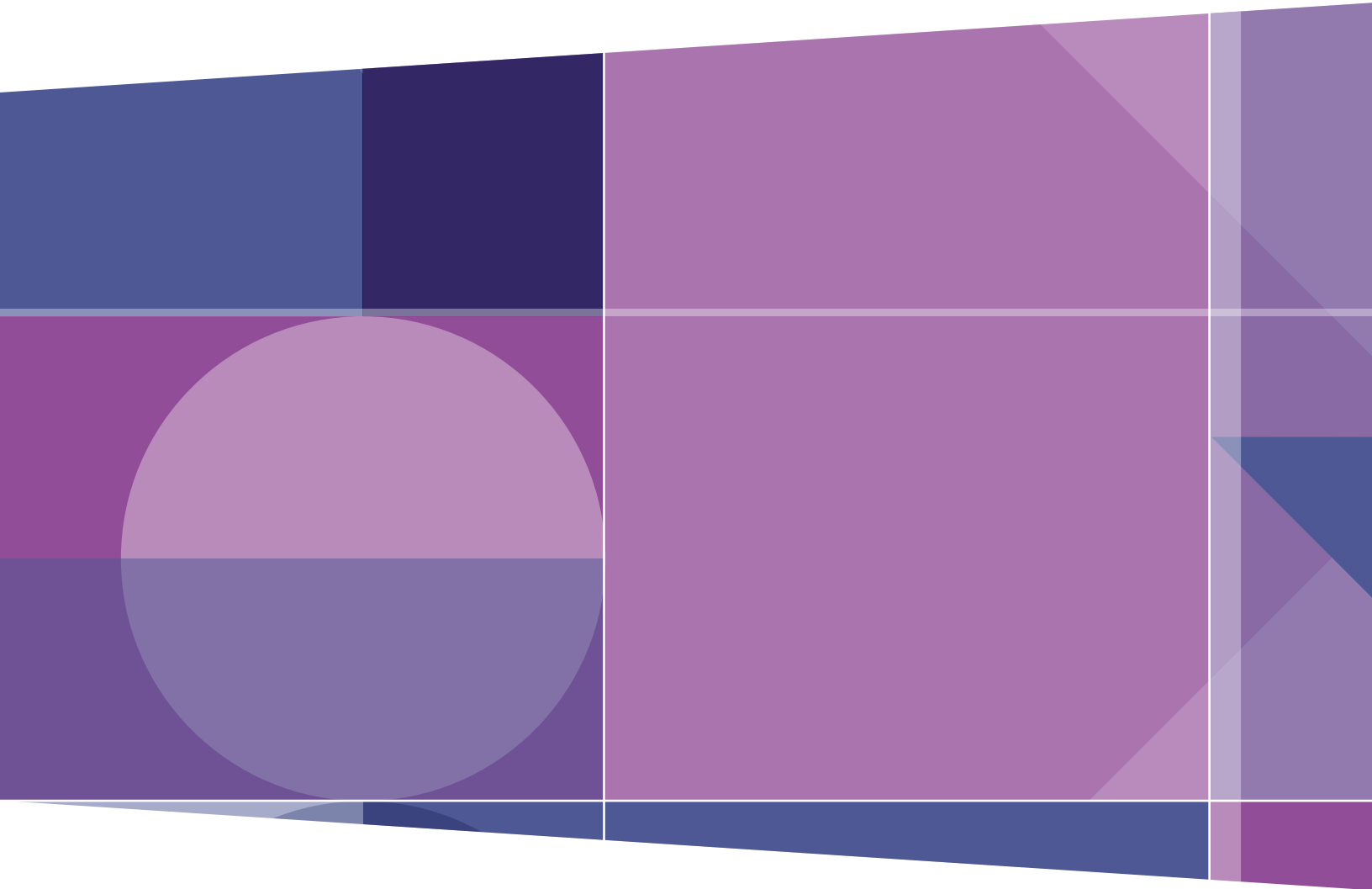
This infographic helps you prevent, identify and treat feelings of burnout. The “treasure hunt” exercise guides you to find joy in your everyday work.

## [WELLNESS GRAPHICS FOR SOCIAL MEDIA](#)

These social media graphics offer small tips and reminders to help you stay well. They can be downloaded and shared on your networks.

Your long-term commitment to family medicine plays a vital role in the health and well-being of your community. Thank you for your membership of the BCCFP and for all that you do for British Columbians.





## CONTACT US

We always like to hear from our members on how we can support you and your practice.

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