

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.¹

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.²

British Columbians value the role family physicians play in coordinating care with other specialists and advocating for complex care needs.³

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.

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.

Attachment to a family physician is associated with lower mortality due to heart disease, cancer, and stroke, as well as better diabetes care.⁴

Family physicians deliver complex care across multiple settings, including clinics, hospitals, long-term care facilities, and in patients' homes.

COMPREHENSIVE

Ongoing care from a family physician helps patients navigate the health care system, improving efficiency and reducing overall costs.¹¹

LONGITUDINAL

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.⁵

The continuity of care provided by family physicians is associated with improved identification and management of chronic illness,⁶ improved patient satisfaction, and fewer hospitalizations and emergency room visits.^{7,8,9,10}

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.



For more information visit bccfp.bc.ca

Sources

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- ⁴ Kiran T, Glazier RH, Campitelli MA, Calzavara A, Stukel TA. Relation between primary care physician supply and diabetes care and outcomes: a cross-sectional study. CMAJ Open. 2016;4(1). doi:10.9778/cmajo.20150065
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https://secure.cihi.ca/free_products/UPC_ReportFINAL_EN.pdf
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- ⁹ Piérard E. The effect of physician supply on health status: Canadian evidence. Health Policy. 2014;118(1):56-65.
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- ¹¹ Barbara Starfield, Leiyu Shi, and James Macinko. Contribution of Primary Care to Health Systems and Health. Millbank Q. 2005. doi: 10.1111/j.1468-0009.2005.00409.x
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2690145/>
- ¹² <https://www.tafp.org/Media/Default/Downloads/advocacy/scope-education.pdf>

In 1978, the World Health Organization issued The Alma-Ata Declaration, which is part of the Health for All initiative. This declaration identified primary health care as the fundamental pillar of healthcare systems. Ref: <https://www.who.int/teams/social-determinants-of-health/declaration-of-alma-ata>

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