



BC COLLEGE OF
FAMILY PHYSICIANS
The home of family medicine

Advocating for Family Doctors

Ways to get Involved



The BC College of Family Physicians relaunched the **My Family Doctor Cares** campaign to advocate on behalf of our profession, our patients and the almost-one-million British Columbians without a family doctor.

Family doctors who want to amplify the campaign through activities of their own can do so in a variety of ways. We have included detailed instructions in the pages that follow.

Throughout April and May — culminating on May 19 for Family Doctor Day — the My Family Doctor Cares campaign will raise awareness that there is a crisis in family medicine that will not improve until the health care system takes better care of the family doctors who take care of British Columbians.

On May 19, we will take our message to Victoria, where we will meet with MLAs to educate them about the experience of family doctors in BC, and our concerns about the health care system.

We know you are busy and overworked, so the BCCFP is executing all facets of the campaign on your behalf.

However, many family doctors have asked how they can help.

This advocacy kit provides detailed instruction on how to get involved (see pgs 2-4) and key talking points regarding the campaign (see pgs 5-9).

Help amplify the campaign:

1. **Meet with your MLA:** On your own or with a group of family doctors in your area, arrange a meeting with your MLA prior to May 19
2. **Share social media posts**
3. **Attend the BCCFP's Day at the Legislature** on May 19
4. **Become a media spokesperson in your community for Family Doctor Day**
5. **Invite concerned patients, family and friends to send a letter to their MLA**
6. **Share your story and concern for the future of family medicine**

See the next page for more details about these advocacy actions.

Campaign Elements

The multi-channel advocacy campaign incorporates:



TV ADVERTISING



MEDIA RELATIONS



SOCIAL MEDIA



GOVERNMENT
COMMUNICATIONS



MEMBER SUPPORT

Advocacy Actions

1. Meet with your MLA

It's important for BC legislators to understand the crisis facing family medicine. An effective way to achieve this is to share your experience with your local MLA.

1. To get the name and contact info for your MLA, visit:
<https://www.leg.bc.ca/learn-about-us/members>

(Note: Search by postal code of your home or practice).

2. On your own, or with a group of family doctors in your area, contact your MLA's office and request a meeting to discuss access to primary care in your community. Where possible, schedule this meeting prior to BCCFP's Day at the Legislature on May 19.

Please let BCCFP know if you have a meeting planned or if you have already met with your MLA.

3. Meet with your MLA and share your experience. Use the talking points at the end of this document as a guide.
4. Invite your MLA to attend the BCCFP's Day at the Legislature – a breakfast meeting in Victoria on May 19. Let them know how important their attendance is to you, your patients and their many constituents who are concerned about having access to a family doctor.

If you can't meet with your MLA, please send a personal email encouraging them to attend BCCFP's Day at the Legislature. To save time, feel free to use the email copy below or customize an email of your own.

EMAIL COPY:

I am a family doctor and member of the BC College of Family Physicians (BCCFP). On May 19, the BCCFP will be hosting a Day at the Legislature breakfast session at the Fairmont Empress at 8:00 a.m.

I am writing to encourage you to attend this session to learn more about the crisis in family medicine.

Almost one million BC residents don't have, and can't get, a family doctor. Research conducted recently by the BCCFP reports that 40 percent of British Columbians with a family doctor are concerned about losing them to retirement or practice closure.

It has never been more challenging to practice comprehensive, longitudinal family medicine in BC. We want to share the experience of family doctors and some solutions to support better health outcomes for patients.

Please let me know if you can join us for breakfast on May 19.

Thank you for your time and interest in family medicine.

Advocacy Actions

2. Share social media posts with your followers

Help amplify the campaign on social media.

Follow BCCFP's social media channels and like or share our posts.

- Twitter: [@BCCFP](#)
- Instagram: [@bcccollegeoffamilyphysicians](#)
- Facebook [@BCCFP](#)

When posting about family medicine, use the hashtags:

#MyFamilyDoctorCares

#EveryoneDeservesaFamilyDoctor

#BCHealthcarematters

3. Attend the BCCFP's Day at the Legislature on May 19

Join us in Victoria on May 19. Share your experience regarding how family practice has changed in recent years and the increasing challenges facing you, your patients and your community.

A delegation of member volunteers will be travelling to Victoria for the May 19 breakfast meeting with MLAs.

Space is limited, so if you are interested in volunteering to join us at this meeting in Victoria, please RSVP to office@bccfp.bc.ca as soon as possible.

4. Become a media spokesperson for Family Doctor Day

We will be carrying out a hyper-local media campaign, sending media releases to local media celebrating family doctors as the foundation of the health care system.

Local media prefers to use local spokespeople. Let us know if you are willing to speak on behalf of family doctors in your community. Email office@bccfp.bc.ca

5. Invite concerned patients, friends and family to send a letter to their MLA

To make this as easy as possible, we have created a form letter that the public can send, simply by inputting their postal code on our website, selecting their MLA and hitting 'send'. The public MLA letter can be found at www.myfamilydoctorcares.ca

The BCCFP has also created a poster for your office that invites patients to add their voice. The poster, which can be downloaded and printed on your office printer, is available here:

<https://bccfp.bc.ca/advocacy/my-family-doctor-cares-campaign/>

Share Your Story: Advocacy Talking Points

1. Family medicine is in a state of crisis

- Almost one million British Columbians don't have, and can't get, a family doctor.
- Fewer family doctors are choosing to work in comprehensive, longitudinal family practice and more family doctors than ever before are considering leaving the profession.
- In a survey conducted by the BCCFP in 2022, 40% of those with a family doctor are concerned they will lose their doctor to retirement or practice closure.
- Of those without a family doctor, 19% cited that the reason was because their family doctor had closed their practice. This is twice the percentage from 2019 (9%).

2. Family doctors are the foundation of the health care system. Investing in family medicine means better health outcomes for British Columbians.

- As the main point of contact for access into the health care system, family doctors play a central role in the early identification of disease and improved management of chronic illness.
- Evidence shows that having a family doctor who knows you and cares for you over time results in better overall health outcomes, higher patient satisfaction, and fewer hospitalizations and emergency room visits.
- The majority of British Columbians (93%) believe continuity of care improves their health and want an ongoing relationship with a family physician.

Share Your Story: Advocacy Talking Points

3. A family doctor's work doesn't end when the last patient leaves our office

- There has been a significant increase in the amount of non-clinical work required of family doctors — from completing forms and managing referrals to sifting through an ever-increasing input of patient data on challenging electronic medical record platforms.
- Up to 25% of a family doctor's week is taken up with administrative work. This is time that could be spent providing direct patient care.

4. We are losing family physicians to other parts of health care

- BC is graduating more family medicine physicians than ever before, but because of the current conditions of work, many are steering away from comprehensive, longitudinal family practice.
- This is also true of later-stage physicians, as we see a growing trend of family doctors moving from primary care to other areas within health care. While these doctors are providing other important services – such as urgent care, working in hospitals and other settings – their absence from working in community-based practices make it harder than ever for the public to find a family doctor.

Share Your Story: Advocacy Talking Points

5. It's not an easy problem to resolve, but the longer we wait, the worse it gets

- Health care is complex, and the issues are not going to be solved overnight. To create a sustainable health care system, family doctors are asking the Province to invest in the foundation on which the health care system rests – primary care provided by family physicians.

6. Investment in primary care needs to include investments in family doctors

- Research shows that the best outcomes are achieved when patients receive ongoing, collaborative, team-based care led by a family doctor.
- UPCCs and NPs have a role to play in improving healthcare capacity, but they should not be used in place of an ongoing relationship with a family doctor.

The following pages include talking points to help communicate solutions for the future of family medicine, as provided by BC Family Doctors.

Proposed Solutions



The BCCFP and BC Family Doctors (BCFD) have each launched a campaign and are working together to speak out about the crisis in family medicine.

BCCFP's campaign is directed to the public and legislators, while BCFD's campaign is targeted to the Physician Master Agreement (PMA) negotiations.

We have included talking points from both campaigns. Talking points to help communicate solutions for the future of family medicine were developed by BC Family Doctors and are identical to what is being proposed for discussions with government.

For more information about BCFD and their priorities for the current PMA negotiations, visit:

bcfamilydocs.ca

A. Increase supports to address the rising costs of doing business

- Family physicians are more than just health care providers; we are small business owners.
- We need help with the rising costs and responsibilities of running community-based family medicine clinics, from privacy protections to infrastructure costs, PPE supplies to virtual care technology.
- Family physicians need more supports to manage the business aspects of medical practice.

B. Modernize and create equity in physician compensation

- The current payment schedule does not reflect modern medical practice or support relationship-based care. It is outdated and inequitable.
- There is a significant pay gap among BC doctors. Women's & children's health care services and mental healthcare are undervalued.
- It is time to address pay equity. We need to modernize the payment schedule and introduce new payment models to ensure primary care services reflect 21st century care delivery.

Proposed Solutions

C. Address systemic factors impacting physician workload and health

- Between charting, completing forms and managing referrals, family physicians spend hours every day doing paperwork that takes time away from patient care.
- We need supports and resources to reduce administrative burdens.
- We need to address the systemic issues impacting our workload and our health, so family physicians can get back to doing the work we love – caring for patients.

D. Increase family physician engagement and representation

- Primary care reform needs to be informed by family physicians' experience and expertise as specialists in primary care.
- We need family physicians at key decision-making tables to improve the system of care for patients and physicians.
- Family physicians need to be seen and heard, speaking to the value of family medicine and our specialist knowledge as family doctors.

If you have questions about getting involved in the campaign, or require additional support, please contact us at:

BC College of Family Physicians
office@bccfp.bc.ca