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New polling shows 40% of British Columbians concerned their family doctor will close their practice or retire

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a family doctor*

VANCOUVER (April 12, 2022)— Forty percent of British Columbians who have a family doctor are worried they will lose them to practice closure or retirement, according to results of a February 2022 research poll conducted by Mustel Group on behalf of the BC College of Family Physicians (BCCFP). This, at a time when almost one million British Columbians currently don't have, and can't get, a family doctor.

Two-thirds of British Columbians without a family doctor cite “can't find one” as the reason, while 19 percent say they don't have a family doctor because their former doctor closed their practice — a 100 percent increase from research polling conducted in 2019.

BCCFP released the results of its research in *Family Doctors Care: The Role and Value of Family Physicians in British Columbia*. The report also details the results of polling research conducted with 800 family doctors.

“Family medicine is in a state of crisis,” says David May, a Powell River family doctor and president of the BCCFP. “Family doctors are leaving their practices and new doctors aren't entering comprehensive family medicine. Without more support from the health care system, things will only get worse. For British Columbians to have access to the care they need and deserve, we need a plan that supports and invests in family doctors.”

British Columbians who have a family doctor give a higher average rating of their experience with the health care system (7.3/10) compared to those who are seen by a nurse practitioner (6.7/10) or use a walk-in clinic (6.5/10).

May points out that family physicians spend upwards of 25 percent of their time in charting, completing forms, and managing referrals — time family doctors believe could be better spent in providing direct patient care.

“We want to work with the BC Government to reduce administrative burdens and improve access to ensure every British Columbian who wants a family doctor has that choice. We need to create the conditions to recruit and retain more family doctors in the practice of family medicine.”

BC's family doctors play a central role in the early identification of disease, improved management of chronic and complex illness and helping people stay well. Evidence shows that a higher supply of family physicians is correlated with better health outcomes.

The BCCFP believes there is a role for family physicians in hospitals, walk-in clinics and urgent care centres, but this should not be at the expense of British Columbians being able to see a family doctor who knows them and has the training and experience to provide quality care over their lifetime.

About the BC College of Family Physicians

BCCFP is a non-profit organization representing more than 6,000 family physicians, residents and medical students in the province that advocates for the future of family medicine. BCCFP conducted research to inform a position paper: [*Family Doctors Care: The Role and Value of Family Physicians in British Columbia.*](#)