

Corporate Update – August 2022

Annual General Meeting

Members and delegates attending the Annual General Meeting on Aug. 21 welcomed Dr. Alika Lafontaine as the organization's 155th president. Dr. Lafontaine became the first Indigenous president in the organization's history. Born and raised in Treaty 4 Territory (Southern Saskatchewan), Dr. Lafontaine has Métis, Oji-Cree, and Pacific Islander ancestry. Dr. Lafontaine is a seasoned advisor who has served in medical leadership positions for almost two decades, including at the Alberta Medical Association, the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada, HealthCareCAN and the Indigenous Physicians Association of Canada.

Dr. Kathleen Ross was elected as the CMA's president-elect for 2023-2024. Dr. Ross is a family physician in Coquitlam and New Westminster who does clinical work in community primary care and obstetrics.

CMA Health Summit Series — Doing Health Differently During COVID and Beyond

The COVID-19 pandemic has pushed an already struggling system to its breaking point and has underscored the urgent need to address wait times and backlogs for service, ensure equitable access to care and support a healthier and more agile workforce. This year, four virtual sessions were held to bring together diverse voices to discuss and debate innovative solutions to:

- reform primary care, reduce wait times and develop new models of care;
- rebuild the health workforce, including how to best recruit, train and retain future health care workers; and
- create a health system that is an engine for economic growth.

The CMA was proud to partner with *The Globe and Mail* and l'Université de Montréal for two of the sessions, one of which was hosted in French. Visit the [CMA Health Summit Series](#) for more information including the key take-aways from each of the sessions.

Advocacy and engagement remain core to the work of the CMA

The CMA is eager to collaborate with policymakers and the profession to address these pan-Canadian health priorities:

- addressing Canada's health workforce crisis
- increasing federal health funding
- advancing new models of health care delivery
- investing in reconciliation and anti-racism
- supporting Canada's ongoing COVID-19 pandemic management

In late December, the [CMA applauded](#) the federal government for passing new legislation (Bill C-3) to protect health workers and patients from threats, violence and harassment. In doing so, the federal government is sending a strong show of support to physicians and all health professionals who are at the forefront of the pandemic. The CMA has also compiled various [resources, tools and services](#) to support physicians and medical learners experiencing online threats and harassment.

In response to the federal government's April 2022 budget, the CMA was pleased to see funds dedicated to addressing the backlog of surgeries and procedures as well as improving access to care in rural and remote

communities. However, the CMA [underscored](#) the point that a stronger commitment to invest in rebuilding Canada's health care system is needed, including a pan-Canadian health workforce plan.

In light of the increasing challenges faced by patients in finding a family physician, the CMA [called](#) on governments to partner with family physicians to find solutions, including the creation of a nationwide data framework to better assess and project future family medicine needs across the country and the implementation of a national licensure model to facilitate the mobility of the current workforce between jurisdictions.

In May, the CMA, in partnership with the Canadian Nurses Association and the College of Family Physicians of Canada, developed health human resources solutions designed to rebuild Canada's health care workforce in a proactive and sustainable way. The plan offers immediate, medium- and long-term policy recommendations for the federal government to adopt and collaborate with its provincial and territorial counterparts. The three organizations presented these recommendations to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Health and the Federal/Provincial/Territorial Committee on Health Workforce. [Read the presentation and recommendations.](#)

In June, the CMA [asked](#) every Member of Parliament to use the summer months to investigate health care issues in their respective ridings so they have a better understanding of current challenges and can bring renewed focus to the fall parliamentary session. To support this work, the CMA suggested that they explore the following themes: addressing family physician shortages, fixing backlogs and wait times, promoting pandemic management and public health measures, engaging with, and supporting marginalized populations, and supporting health workers.

In July, the CMA, the Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions, the Canadian Nurses Association and HealthCareCAN called on Canada's premiers to make health care their top priority at the Council of the Federation's 2022 summer meeting. Following this meeting, the CMA [issued](#) a statement that governments must collaborate now to fix Canada's collapsing health care system.

Emergency Health Worker Summit

In March, the CMA and the Canadian Nurses Association were joined by almost 40 health organizations for a [second emergency meeting](#) to discuss the health worker crisis (the first was held in October 2021). The issues faced by the health workforce worsened since the first meeting, and while there has been recognition of the work of the health workforce during the pandemic, concrete commitments to address the issues are lagging.

Participants highlighted that now is the time to become tactical about the development and implementation of a nationwide strategy. Key priorities identified include creating a robust data source of health human resources, implementing a multidisciplinary nationwide health human resource strategy, and committing to transform Canada's health care system for the future.

Physician health and wellness

National Physician Health Survey

In August the CMA released the [results](#) of its 2021 National Physician Health Survey, which provide crucial data on physicians' well-being and will help inform the CMA's work to build a better future for health and health care and a thriving health workforce.

Responses from more than 4,000 physicians, medical residents and medical students shed light on challenges to physician health and wellness, including lack of work-life integration, bullying and harassment, high administrative burden, lack of professional fulfilment and, of course, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Pandemic Wellness Toolkit

The CMA is encouraging physicians to check in on their own health and has created a [Pandemic Wellness Toolkit](#) to help them get started. The toolkit has evidence-based wellness supports, including:

- a wellness self-assessment tool;
- access to peer support and counselling services; and
- resources to help them connect with their peers, support their teams, and overcome challenges related to the pandemic.

Sound Mind: podcast on physician wellness and medical culture

Hosted by the CMA's Dr. Caroline Gérin-Lajoie, this podcast features conversations with physicians, learners and leaders about what being a "healthy" physician means, the barriers that still exist and the people, programs and projects that are helping medical professionals stay well. Episodes in season 2 are as follows:

- *Threats, harassment and trolls: Is being a "public" medical voice worth it?*
- *The personal cost of leading Canada's public health response to COVID-19*
- *Death threats and safety protocols: the troubling new reality for many physicians*
- *Code White: Protecting ED staff from workplace violence*
- *Dr. Mom and COVID-19: The stress of being in constant demand*
- *The "Great Resignation" comes to medicine*
- *Meaning in medicine: Front-line physicians in Ukraine*
- *The benefits of team-based care*
- *Being Indigenous in med school*
- *How we're doing. Really.*

Access the entire series [here](#).

Indigenous health and anti-racism

The CMA is committed to working in allyship with First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Peoples to develop an action plan that focuses on improving the health outcomes of Indigenous peoples. To help us achieve this goal, we're establishing the [Guiding Circle](#), a group of First Nations, Inuit and Métis individuals with relevant expertise who will collaborate with and advise the CMA on ways we can contribute to improving the health outcomes of Indigenous peoples.

With funding and support from the CMA, BUILD. Films and Networked Health created the film [The Unforgotten](#), which exposes the experience of First Nations, Inuit and Métis with the health care system across five stages of life: birth, childhood, adolescence, adulthood and elderhood. The film explores systemic racism, the impacts of colonialism and the ongoing trauma experienced by Indigenous Peoples. The film is accompanied by educational resources to raise awareness, encourage reflection, and spark conversations about how to achieve meaningful change.

In 2021, the CMA Foundation [announced](#) a grant of \$1 million to the Indigenous Physicians Association of Canada to support a national formalized mentorship program for Indigenous medical learners and to enable capacity building within the organization.
