



Alastair Younger

Dear Colleagues;

“Doctor for Doctors; Doctors for Patients”

Economics

As a surgeon that works both in the community and in a teaching hospital, I know firsthand the challenge of caring for patients while running a business. With increased patient complexity, new infectious precautions, and government control over our fees, many of us feel tremendous financial stress that affects us personally and impacts our ability to provide the best patient care. This is the likely cause of physician burnout.

We need better models of care and innovation in how we are paid. For example, the lack of primary care physicians is not the lack of training, the lack of excellent graduates or the lack of a vision as to the goals they wish to achieve. It is the lack of a viable financial model by which physicians are able to practice. Despite the many studies that show that care is better when a patient has a family doctor, many patients do not have one. This is an issue for our entire profession because it erodes our ability to share patient care and drives up costs to our system. **As physicians, we remain the best value for dollar in the health care and are best equipped to lead change.** We must not only be at the table for primary care reform, but persist so that there is a viable business model for all community based doctors.

And yes, I do recognise Family Medicine as a Specialty.

It is time to create a financial model for the reimbursement of physicians that respects the patients, the health ministry and the physicians. Are we health ministry employees or independent contractors? It often feels like both as we have obligations of an employee without the benefits. We have recently seen excellent progress with the COVID salaries, and this is a potential model for future care models. Many of you have told me that financial stressors are a major concern, and there are other issues as well that I believe Doctors of BC should continue to lead.

COVID Response

Despite the unprecedented and swift onset of the pandemic, we have all worked hard to pivot our practices and lives. Regardless of few of us having any disaster training, we have shown ourselves to be resilient, flexible and able to rise to the challenge of COVID. We have come together as a profession to recognise the unique role that each of us plays. We have supported colleagues and raised our voices in unison to ask for clearer guidelines, accessible PPE, and stable financial support during this crisis. I have never been more proud to be your colleague. The 7 pm salute is well-earned, and we need to leverage the public's goodwill into tangible improvements to our healthcare system.

Equity, Inclusion, Diversity

We need equal opportunity, inclusivity and tolerance. Leadership needs to be compassionate, thoughtful and tolerant. **We need to listen more and engage in respectful dialogue.** I am encouraged by the steps that Doctors of BC has taken to address these issues and I promise that if elected, I will continue to support this work to ensure that our Association is as safe, supportive, and inclusive as possible.

Waitlists & Coordinated Care

Through my patients, I have learned of the challenges of fragmented care. I have learned about the disadvantaged and the plight of the downtown eastside in Vancouver and remote communities around the province. I am well aware of the cost to patients of wait lists and lack of access to care. Doctors such as surgeons, anesthetists, and those working in post-op care need to be more involved in the management of wait lists for surgery. **It strikes me that the wait lists could be much better managed with physicians in open dialogue with the ministry.** This is what I will strive for in this and other health care goals.

Leadership

I believe that I am well-qualified to help lead Doctors of BC. I recognize that as President-Elect I will have an important vote on the Board of Directors and as President I will continue to listen to you and be your voice.

I am experienced in advocating for doctors and working collaboratively. I am the president of the BC Orthopaedic Association for three years and have been on the executive for a number of years prior. I have been involved in the disparity process and am the orthopaedic representative to the Specialists of BC.

I have learned that the challenges of one Section are often the challenges of all physicians.

My Background

The nature of my practice has brought me in contact with many physicians over the years.

I am a busy tertiary care orthopaedic surgeon at St. Paul's Hospital, and practice and teach foot and ankle care. My patients come from both rural and urban areas throughout BC and they represent a window through which to view strengths and weaknesses of every aspect of care in BC. As a fee-for-service physician running a community-based clinic, I am aware of the financial realities of fee for service practice, and the effects of inflation.

I am also a UBC tenure-track professor, a teacher, a researcher, and an innovator. I have over 300 publications to date. UBC has a critical role to play in our education and our future in both undergraduate and postgraduate training. The research that can change the future of our practice and the control of the COVID epidemic is performed through the university. The trio of the health ministry, the university and the Doctors of BC are the instruments towards the future of care in this province.

Nationally, I have been a guest speaker in many Canadian programs and cities over the years through my research and teaching, from Corner Brook and St. Johns to Victoria and Powell River. I am on the Practice Management Committee for the Canadian Orthopaedic Association (COA), and on the board of the COA giving me insight as to how the provision of care varies across Canada.

Personally, I trained in three countries and I am fortunate that my lectures have taken me around the world and given me insight into what works and what does not work in other health system models.

I am happily married to Tamara, a nurse and a surgical program leader at SPH. We have 4 children aged 21 to 26. Our house remains busy with constant family activity! We enjoy cycling, golf, the outdoors and Whistler. Some of you will know me as a Blackcomb hill doctor!

Thank you for taking the time to read this. If you agree with me that on the need for healthy and well-supported physicians leading a healthy and well-funded medical system, then I hope you will support my candidacy for President-Elect of Doctors of BC.

Sincerely,



Alastair