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Candidate for Specialist Position Doctor of BC's Board of Directors

Pediatrician and ID specialist with over 30 years experience working in Prince George, BC

Past President of the BC Pediatric Society

Past Board member of the Canadian Pediatric Society

I suspect that most physicians like myself delight in seeing progress. While we certainly see this in some of the transformative changes in health care - especially the technological aspects (think of the availability of MRI even compared to a few years ago) I don't feel that this translates to improvements in health care in general. In fact I would suggest like others that we are in a health care crisis.

Thirty years ago I was outraged that somebody would wait four hours in the ER! Now of course the excuse for the 10 hour wait is "it is like this everywhere".

When I arrived in Prince George everybody had a family doctor. In fact it was one of the reasons that I stayed in BC. I remember years ago going back to an idyllic town in Ontario to do a locum. Discharging neonates from the ward was a disconcerting experience - many of the families did not have a family physician to see in follow-up. There was an instant realization that this had huge repercussions to my work as a specialist. Whether one is a surgeon looking for post surgical follow up, a respirologist looking for somebody to take over care of a senior with COPD or myself trying to discharge a neonate from the NICU, specialists depend on this. Thirty years later in Prince George there are no family doctors available to take on new patients - even the clinics designed for unattached patients have a waiting list! We have more than twice the number of doctors and a population in Prince George that has hardly increased.

Years ago administration was present and approachable. I could walk down the administrative corridor where the hospital director, their assistant and the chief of nursing were ensconced along with their admin assistants (who really ran the hospital) talk to the director, tell him my concerns, and wait while he made a phone call which usually led to things being sorted out. Contrast that to now: the hospital that I work in has less beds now than when I arrived and it is impossible to figure out which administrator to talk to, nevermind enact change.

What is the underlying cause of all of this - my feeling is that the physician voice is no longer being heard or valued. Whether at a government, health authority or hospital level we need to make sure that the doctors are once more seen as essential to any planning that takes place. It is easy to blame the pandemic (which no question has been disastrous) but the shortage of personnel (nurses, technicians, physicians ...) and resources (hospital beds, community resources etc.) has

long predated this.

Do I think we can turn back time to 30 years ago - no! But I do think that if physicians do not start to regain influence in health care decisions at all levels that positive systemic change will not occur. We are the ones caring for the patients, working in the ER, operating in the OR, talking to patients in their rooms, walking in the hospital corridors at any time of the day and night - we see the problems and the changes that need to be made. Doctors of BC needs to promote a strong physicians' voice so we can truly transform health care to enable physicians to be able to care for patients.

Yours sincerely,



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