

2021 HEALTH AUTHORITY ENGAGEMENT SURVEY REPORT

Results and key highlights from the sixth annual Doctors of BC
Health Authority Engagement Survey

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Colleagues,

Collaboration is the cornerstone of a safe and engaged workplace, and fostering a sense of teamwork and positive connections between doctors and health authorities is a major part of Doctors of BC's work.



In September 2021, Doctors of BC asked members to take part in our sixth annual Health Authority Engagement Survey, which helps us gauge how you are feeling about engagement with your health authority and/or local hospital. Your feedback provides us with important insights on how we can better advocate for you, within your health authority and across your communities. This year, the survey received its highest number of respondents ever – I would like to thank all 3,301 of you for sharing your voices with us.

We all faced another difficult year, one filled with disappointment, stress, and sometimes hope as the pandemic continued, and in many cases these issues were woven into your responses. While 2020's results saw good communications and engagement levels, this year's 2021 report suggests members feel less satisfied with their health authority as a place to practice medicine. This year, despite scores remaining higher than 2019 levels, overall scores dropped in comparison to the 2020 survey results.

We recognize that doctors are dealing with an extraordinary combination of challenges at present. While these challenges persist, Doctors of BC continues to advocate for you, and provide you with the resources you need. For example, we know that physician health and safety continues to be a major concern, so we developed the Physician Health and Safety Agreement, making it so physicians are included in widespread systemic change to better support psychological health and safety in the workplace; and with the financial help of the Canadian Medical Association and other stakeholders, through the Physician Health Program we are enhancing existing programs and developing new ones to meet the current and future wellness needs of the profession.

We are also working consistently on fostering collaborative relationships at the provincial and local levels, with Divisions of Family Practice, MSAs, and other physician groups. Going forward, we will be reaching out to each health authority to provide further context, and to discuss opportunities to address concerns raised by you. Only through these opportunities can we create systemic change.

Your feedback matters, and informs decision-making at Doctors of BC in many important ways. It is only through working together and learning from each other that we can build the health care system we all want to see. A collaborative work culture results in better patient care, and an environment in which BC's doctors feel seen and valued.

Thank you again to all members who took time out of their schedules to share their thoughts with us. This review is so valuable, particularly as we navigate these times as individuals, and together as a profession.

Sincerely,

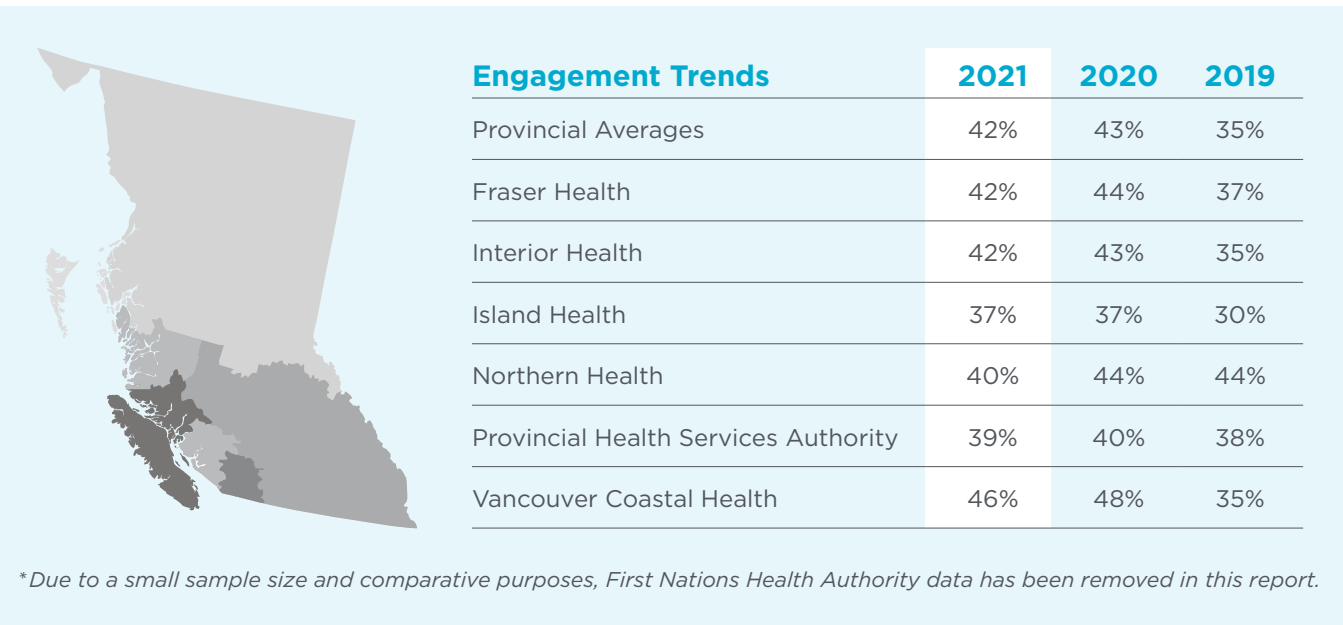
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'RD', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Dr Ramneek Dosanjh,
President, Doctors of BC

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This was the sixth year that all members of Doctors of BC were invited to participate in this survey. Across BC, a record 3,301 physicians participated and ranked levels of engagement, health, safety, and trust with their respective health authority. More than 2,500 comments were also shared by physicians. The following summary highlights what survey participants shared.

The 2021 Health Authority Engagement Survey told a story of physicians working hard, caring for patients, and unfortunately, feeling fatigue and frustration while trying to provide care. This year, despite scores being higher than 2019 levels, scores dropped in comparison to 2020's survey results. More specifically, seven of the nine engagement statements saw decreases ranging from 2% to 5% over the past year, while one in two physicians have been involved in and/or impacted by a health and safety incident. This was largely expressed by physicians in terms of the continued pressures on the health system that they had to overcome to serve their patients. However, scores are still up considerably from 2016's survey results.



Doctors of BC will use these results to raise concerns and suggestions at provincial, regional and local levels. At a provincial level, Doctors of BC will be advocating to incorporate these survey results as physician engagement performance measures for all health authorities. We will present the results to senior health authority leadership.

At regional and local levels, we are supporting physicians through our Regional Physician Health and Safety Working Groups established under the 2019 Memorandum of Agreement on Physical and Psychological Safety. We will also be providing Medical Staff Associations and Divisions of Family Practice with the opportunity to learn about their local/site specific results. This will enhance discussions and engagement with local medical leaders.

INITIAL RECOMMENDATIONS

In addition to the survey results, physicians shared many comments and suggestions on how we can continue to improve engagement. The following is an initial summary of these recommendations.

1. **Local leaders are critical.** Their ability to help facilitate local solutions and help raise issues to senior leaders or clarify communications and directions, is extremely important. Local leaders need to be given the flexibility to solve local issues.
2. **Be visible** – senior and local leaders should continue to make themselves known and seen. This can occur through webinars, information sessions, and various communications. It also helps to outline priorities, areas of accountability, and the opportunity to hear from leaders and ask questions.
3. **Encourage physician input** – create early and ongoing opportunities to seek out perspectives from physicians, while also respecting their time. Many physicians still feel that engagement or communication is happening late in many instances, where decisions have largely already been made. They are also concerned that where some opportunities were created, they were done based on convenient scheduling or timelines for others, and not physicians. To address this issue, health authorities should book meetings/ engagement opportunities with advance notice, and create inclusive communication options (use a combination of forums, surveys, and interviews). Health authorities can also use existing structures such as Medical Staff Associations and Divisions of Family Practice to engage with physicians.
4. **Listen, act where you can, and be transparent** – physicians want to know that they have been heard. They also want to know that in some cases where they raise a concern that health authorities have acted on or investigated it. It's also important to help outline how decisions are being made, and where and how feedback is tracked and considered.



3,301 physicians
completed
the survey



27% survey
response rate



Since 2016, overall
engagement trends
are increasing

1 in 2

Physicians
impacted by a
safety incident

INTRODUCTION

For six years in a row, Doctors of BC has asked the same nine engagement questions regarding overall satisfaction, engagement, and senior leadership from previous surveys to track trends over time.

Over the last two years, we have added additional questions to the survey. In 2020, we added questions on physical and psychological health and safety. New to 2021's survey were questions regarding physicians feeling valued within their hospital/facility, and physicians and medical leaders trusting one another in their hospital/facility. This year we also asked two demographic-related questions (which were optional) on race and gender; these results were analysed at a provincial level to maintain confidentiality and anonymity.

The 2021 survey results also provided insights into the following topics:

- The degree to which physicians feel their engagement is supported by leadership in terms of communications, involvement and their ability to influence the quality of care.
- How proximity to local medical leaders impacts the perceptions of trust.
- The degree to which physicians feel safety is a priority and being acted upon within their workplace.
- Supportive issues related to feelings of belonging, feeling valued, inclusion, and fairness.
- While an expansive view was not taken on the topic of resilience, the survey did include a question on physicians' ability to balance work and personal life.

This report outlines a summary of the provincial and regional data collected, organized by the following sections:

- Overall Engagement trends: Provincial & Regional
- Physicians Feeling Valued by Health Authority Leaders
- Physician Health and Safety
- Trust Between Physicians and Medical Leaders
- Methodology, Response Rates, and Demographics

For detailed breakdowns including by facility/hospital and division, please see the Supplemental Report linked [here](#).

HOW TO INTERPRET THE DATA ON ENGAGEMENT LEVELS

When participating in the survey, members have the opportunity to agree or disagree with each question. All engagement questions and most of the health and safety questions are neutrally or positively worded. Agreement is considered a positive indicator of engagement and overall health and safety.

WHAT WAS THE GOAL?

For the last six years, Doctors of BC has measured engagement between BC physicians and their respective health authority, the results of which provide a tool to improve engagement and inform discussions at a provincial, regional and local level. These surveys also provided opportunities for members to share their thoughts on whether they feel valued, their level of trust with leadership, as well as the health and safety of their workplace and several other engagement elements vital for an engaged workplace.

HOW DID WE SEEK MEMBER INPUT?

All members received an email inviting them to participate in the online survey conducted by external polling firm TWI Surveys. The survey was sent by email and was open from September 13, 2021 to October 13, 2021.



KEY FINDINGS

The following section outlines some of the key findings from this year's survey. This section does not cover all the results, but instead focuses on three areas: engagement and value, trust, and safety. These three areas are critical for physicians overall sense of engagement. Also included are preliminary recommendations to help address some of these areas, where we have noted positive changes as well as some opportunities for improvement, as outlined below.

ENGAGEMENT AND VALUE

Positive Progress:

- Senior leadership questions related to engagement and transparency remained stable from last year and did not decrease.
- More physicians felt their health authorities were valuing physician contributions.

Opportunities:

- It comes as no surprise that more physicians are having difficulty accessing resources that enable them to meet patient needs. Inadequate staff levels of family physicians, specialists, nurses, locums, and technicians were cited as causes.
- Heavy workloads are impacting physicians' abilities to reasonably balance the demands of work and personal life. The examples they gave related to filling in the gaps in the system, working in departments that are overwhelmed, and team member burn-out.
- Fewer physicians feel they had adequate opportunities to improve patient care, quality, and safety; and fewer physicians feel they had meaningful input into changes affecting their practice environment. This was reflected by a decrease in scores by 5% since 2020.
- There continues to be a difference in engagement scores for those who identify as a medical leader, and those who do not. The overall engagement score for medical leaders remains between 51% and 54%, whereas the average engagement score for non-medical leaders has been approximately 40% for the past two years.

TRUST BETWEEN PHYSICIANS AND MEDICAL LEADERS

This year the survey investigated the issue of trust between physicians and medical leaders in greater detail, as it is a critical factor in engagement. The results demonstrate that trust in medical leadership is greater at the local level than at the senior health authority level.

Local Level: 54% agree that physicians and medical leaders trust one another in my hospital/facility

Regional Level: 37% agree that physicians and medical leaders trust one another in my health authority

Physician's comments reinforced this, as they noted the ability to personally know local leaders and to be able to engage with them in their facilities.

Positive Progress:

- Some physicians shared reasons for optimism in their relationship and experiences. Outreach by medical leaders, where it occurs, is mentioned and valued, and site-level engagements that resulted in positive changes are cited and appreciated.
- Other physicians noted Facility Engagement along with more quality improvement initiatives as being valuable for continuous improvements.

At each level of leadership there is a significant opportunity to improve relationships. The request from physicians: **Engage and listen to them early in the decision-making process, and act on concerns they have shared.**

PHYSICIAN HEALTH AND SAFETY

Physicians are feeling less likely that their hospital/facility will take action to keep them safe. For example:

- Workplaces feel less safe, and physicians feel they are more likely to have been involved in, or impacted by, a physical safety or psychological safety issue or incident at their current hospital/facility/practice.
- More physicians believe effective actions are not being taken to prevent violence in the workplace (7% decline since 2020), and fewer physicians feel the hospital/facility are taking actions to promote a healthy and safe workplace (3% decline since 2020).
- Female physicians were less likely to feel their hospital/facility deals effectively with situations that may threaten or harm employees (men 51% vs. women 43%).
- In Northern Health, there was a 13% decline in agreement (53% agree) to the perception that people from all backgrounds are treated fairly in the workplace. In comparison, Fraser Health had a 2% increase in agreement (75% agree) to the same question. Provincially, men were 73% in agreement whereas women were 64% in agreement.
- More physicians are reporting not having the ability to balance the demands of work and personal life, with agreement scores moving from 56% in 2020, to 51% this year.

DOCTORS OF BC COMMITMENTS – ADVOCATING FOR YOU

In early 2022, Doctors of BC will present these results to the Ministry of Health, senior health authority leaders, Medical Staff Associations, and Divisions of Family Practice, along with our broader membership.

These presentations provide the survey results and create opportunities for physicians, the Ministry of Health, and health authorities to engage on these topics at a local and regional level. The goal is to create further chances for physicians to be heard, and engage constructively with health authorities.

Other commitments made by Doctors of BC include:

- **At a provincial level**, Doctors of BC is a member of the newly formed BC Occupational Health and Safety Society, where we are advocating for physician safety at the provincial level – the first time physicians have been represented at this level.
- **At a regional level**, Doctors of BC is advocating with health authorities and supporting doctors through Physician Health and Safety Groups, which were established under the 2019 Memorandum of Agreement on Physical and Psychological Safety.
- **At a local level**, Doctors of BC provides support to Divisions of Family Practice and Medical Staff Associations to effectively work and engage with health authorities. From improvements to Emergency Department flow and capacity in hospitals, to running physician wellness and peer support workshops, there is progress being made across the province.
- Doctors of BC will be working with physician members to help encourage and support them in engaging with health authorities where meaningful opportunities are created for physician input and engagement.

PHYSICIAN FEEDBACK AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The survey results and member comments have informed a set of recommendations that provide tangible steps that can help address some challenges outlined by physicians. The following outlines a summary of key themes, including highlighting greater engagement and recognition opportunities between local leaders and both facility and community based physicians and enhancing safety in the workplace. Following the summary is a set of initial recommendations based on the survey results, which will help health authorities and physicians enhance overall engagement.

Summary of Physician Comments

Engagement & Recognition

- Physicians expressed that in order to feel “engaged”, two key elements need to be present:
 1. Physician input needs to take place early on in the decision making process.
 2. Leadership should follow up on input provided or issues raised by taking action or outlining how/why a situation could or could not be addressed. There are concerns that seeking of input is just “talk”.
- Physicians would like to see an ongoing collaborative approach to problem solving between care providers and leadership:

“Continue to meet and co-design solutions with care providers. Nothing about us without us.”

- A strong message in 2021 was the “burn out” and “moral distress” that physicians are feeling, particularly in light of the pandemic. As a result, one of the most prevalent themes this year was recognition – physicians want to feel more appreciated and valued. Many feel like small gestures of appreciation can go a long way in boosting physician morale, particularly during such difficult times.
- Physicians feel that leadership can be more open with how and why decisions are made. Often they are told what the decisions are, but are not given opportunities to ask questions and have discussions that explain why certain choices are made. One of the biggest challenges for physicians is when decisions are made and communicated to them by those who do not have recent or relevant experience working on the front lines:

“My health authority needs to seek more physician input when making decisions involving patient care. Many of the decisions impacting our work is thought up by people who have not worked on the ground for years.”

- Some physicians felt that transparency was quite positive at the department head level, but suffered at levels beyond that:

“Trust is actually quite good to the level of the regional department head, but decisions made above that are often opaque.”

- To add to the frustration, some physicians simply do not know who their leaders are and could not identify them walking down the hall. This adds another challenging layer for physicians trying to have more open and collaborative relationships with their leadership.

Safety

- Another notable theme in 2021 was the importance of physical and psychological safety. Physicians feel patients have become more aggressive during the pandemic, and as a result they do not feel safe particularly in violent situations. For example, one physician described:

“The protests in front of the hospital that happened recently were distressing to some of my colleagues. There was only one security guard present and it was too much for them to manage understandably. The police were called by one of my colleagues. Some more security and back-up in these incidences would be helpful.”

- Bullying and discrimination was another consistent theme across all health authorities. Many feel like there is no anonymous or protected mechanism in place to make reports while avoiding the potential repercussions.

Initial Recommendations

Physicians offered a number of suggestions to increase trust between their respective leadership and to feel valued by the health authority along with suggestions on how to enhance health and safety in the workplace. The following lists some tangible steps that both local and seniors leaders can initiate to support physician engagement and overall well-being.

For local leaders: Engage on local solutions and communicate

- Demonstrate that you are raising issues “up the ladder” where appropriate and communicating back.
- Provide more orientation and on-boarding opportunities by medical leadership for new physicians.
- Be more transparent about finances by providing more information about budgets.
- Share the highlights and work that physicians are doing at their local hospitals with the public and local community.
- Offer appreciation meals, celebrations or other types of events where physicians (working during the day and evenings) can attend with their colleagues and/or team members.
- In-person (or over the phone) messages of appreciation.
- Dedicate resources and support to clarify and communicate relevant processes and procedures.
- Enable and support a ‘speak up’ culture where concerns can be raised without fear of reprisal.

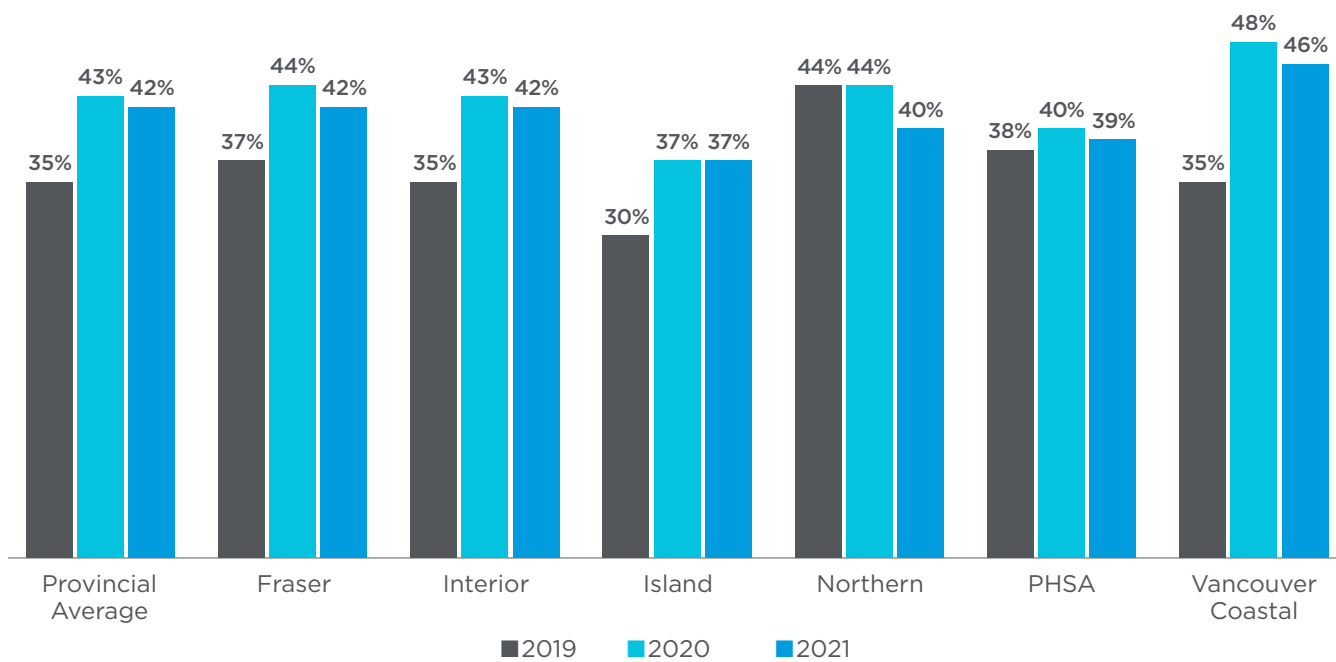
For senior leaders: Be visible and engage – it is important as ever.

- Be more present at sites and meet with physicians in person, where possible.
- Take time to shadow and learn more about what physicians experience on a day-to-day basis.
- Create regular opportunities for physicians to connect with leaders.
- Leverage existing structures (MAC, MSA, FE, Divisions, PQI) to engage physicians in dialogue and professional development.
- Host townhall meetings, whether in person or virtually to provide more information and ask for input.
- Help physicians understand who their leaders are and who they should approach with concerns or questions.
- Be clear on responses – even when the answer is “no”, and explain why.

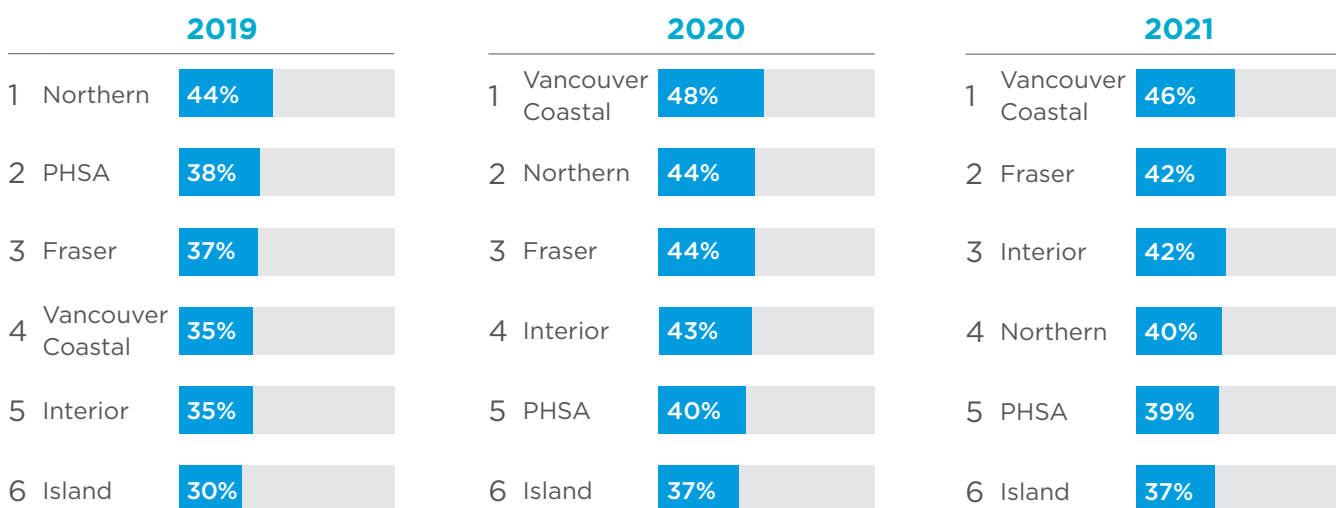
PROVINCIAL OVERVIEW

OVERALL ENGAGEMENT TRENDS

Average scores for the same nine engagement questions asked in previous years



Overall Engagement Averages 2019-2021



Provincial Engagement Scores	2021	2020 Difference
I am satisfied with this health authority as a place to practice medicine.	60%	-4%
I feel I belong to a collaborative, patient-centered team/unit.	61%	-3%
I have access to the facilities, equipment, and other resources I require to meet patients' needs.	52%	-2%
I have adequate opportunities to improve patient care, quality, and safety.	49%	-5%
I have meaningful input into changes affecting my practice environment.	37%	-4%
Senior leaders communicate the health authority's plans to physicians in a clear and timely way.	35%	0%
Senior leaders seek physicians' input when setting the health authority's goals.	26%	0%
Senior leaders' decision-making is transparent to physicians.	18%	+1%
This health authority values physicians' contributions.	37%	+3%

Regional vs Local Feelings of Value – Provincial Average	2021	2020 Difference
This health authority values physicians' contributions.	37%	+3%
This hospital/facility values physicians' contributions.*	51%	-

* New question for 2021.

Provincial Physician Health and Safety Scores	2021	2020 Difference
I have been involved in, or impacted by a physical safety or psychological safety issue or incident at my current hospital/facility/practice.	50%	+4%
This hospital/facility takes effective action to prevent violence in the workplace.	53%	-7%
This hospital/facility takes effective action to promote a healthy and safe workplace.	52%	-3%
People treat each other with respect and consideration in our workplace.	73%	-1%
I am able to reasonably balance the demands of work and personal life.	51%	-5%
People from all backgrounds are treated fairly in our workplace.	68%	-2%
My hospital/facility deals effectively with situations that may threaten or harm employees (e.g., harassment, discrimination, violence).	47%	-1%

Regional vs Local Levels of Trust Between Physicians and Medical Leaders – Provincial Average

	2021	2020 Difference
Physicians and medical leaders trust one another in my health authority.*	37%	-
Physicians and medical leaders trust one another in my hospital/facility.*	54%	-

* New question for 2021.



REGIONAL OVERVIEW

FRASER HEALTH



Engagement	2021	2020 Difference	Provincial Average
I am satisfied with this health authority as a place to practice medicine.	61%	-3%	60%
I feel I belong to a collaborative, patient-centered team/unit.	61%	-4%	61%
I have access to the facilities, equipment, and other resources I require to meet patients' needs.	52%	-3%	52%
I have adequate opportunities to improve patient care, quality, and safety.	49%	-4%	49%
I have meaningful input into changes affecting my practice environment.	37%	-6%	37%
Senior leaders communicate the health authority's plans to physicians in a clear and timely way.	35%	0%	35%
Senior leaders seek physicians' input when setting the health authority's goals.	28%	+2%	26%
Senior leaders' decision-making is transparent to physicians.	20%	+2%	18%
This health authority values physicians' contributions.	36%	+3%	37%

Key Observations

- Physicians feel they have less meaningful input into changes affecting their practice, dropping from 43% in 2020 to 37% in 2021.
- Senior leadership scores increased by 2% in input and transparency, marking a positive change among the region's leadership and physicians.

Physicians Feeling Valued	2021	2020 Difference
This health authority values physicians' contributions.	36%	+3%
This hospital/facility values physicians' contributions.*	50%	-

* New question for 2021.

Key Observation

- Physicians feel more valued for their contributions in Fraser Health than they did in 2020, with scores up by 3%. However, the difference between feeling valued for contributions at the local level is significantly higher than the regional level at 50% and 36%, respectively.

Physician Health and Safety	2021	2020 Difference
I have been involved in, or impacted by a physical safety or psychological safety issue or incident at my current hospital/facility/practice.	49%	+6%
This hospital/facility takes effective action to prevent violence in the workplace.	53%	-8%
This hospital/facility takes effective action to promote a healthy and safe workplace.	53%	-5%
People treat each other with respect and consideration in our workplace.	77%	-1%
I am able to reasonably balance the demands of work and personal life.	55%	-2%
People from all backgrounds are treated fairly in our workplace.	75%	+2%
My hospital/facility deals effectively with situations that may threaten or harm employees (e.g., harassment, discrimination, violence).	52%	-1%

Key Observations

- More physicians report being involved or impacted by physical or psychological safety incidents in the Fraser region, with a 6% increase since 2020 (43% to 49%).
- There were decreases in scores around hospitals/facilities taking effective action to either promote a healthy and safe workplace (58% down to 53%) or prevent violence (61% to 53%).

Trust Between Physicians and Medical Leaders	2021	2020 Difference
Physicians and medical leaders trust one another in my health authority.*	39%	-
Physicians and medical leaders trust one another in my hospital/facility.*	57%	-

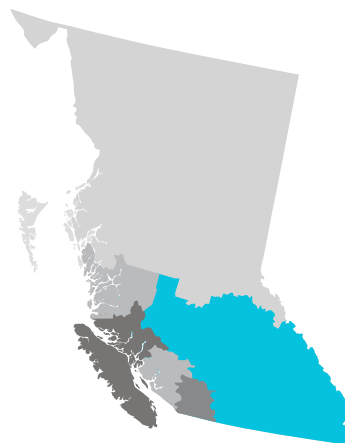
* New question for 2021.

Key Observation

- Trust between physicians and medical leaders is much lower at the regional level than at the local level (39% and 57%).

REGIONAL OVERVIEW

INTERIOR HEALTH



Engagement	2021	2020 Difference	Provincial Average
I am satisfied with this health authority as a place to practice medicine.	58%	-7%	60%
I feel I belong to a collaborative, patient-centered team/unit.	62%	+1%	61%
I have access to the facilities, equipment, and other resources I require to meet patients' needs.	54%	-1%	52%
I have adequate opportunities to improve patient care, quality, and safety.	50%	-1%	49%
I have meaningful input into changes affecting my practice environment.	40%	-2%	37%
Senior leaders communicate the health authority's plans to physicians in a clear and timely way.	34%	+1%	35%
Senior leaders seek physicians' input when setting the health authority's goals.	24%	-1%	26%
Senior leaders' decision-making is transparent to physicians.	15%	0%	18%
This health authority values physicians' contributions.	40%	+3%	37%

Key Observations

- Overall satisfaction as a place to practice medicine decreased considerably to 58% in Interior Health, down from 65% in 2020. Physician comments suggest this is largely driven by pandemic working conditions.
- Notably, most other engagement scores have stayed relatively the same with a 0%-2% change from 2020.

Physicians Feeling Valued	2021	2020 Difference
This health authority values physicians' contributions.	40%	+3%
This hospital/facility values physicians' contributions.*	55%	-

* New question for 2021.

Key Observation

- Physicians feel more valued for their contributions in Interior Health than they did in 2020, with scores up by 3%. However, the difference between feeling valued for contributions at the local level is significantly higher than the regional level at 55% and 40%, respectively.

Physician Health and Safety	2021	2020 Difference
I have been involved in, or impacted by a physical safety or psychological safety issue or incident at my current hospital/facility/practice.	47%	-1%
This hospital/facility takes effective action to prevent violence in the workplace.	54%	-6%
This hospital/facility takes effective action to promote a healthy and safe workplace.	52%	-4%
People treat each other with respect and consideration in our workplace.	72%	-1%
I am able to reasonably balance the demands of work and personal life.	54%	-5%
People from all backgrounds are treated fairly in our workplace.	68%	-3%
My hospital/facility deals effectively with situations that may threaten or harm employees (e.g., harassment, discrimination, violence).	46%	-5%

Key Observations

- Approximately half of participating physicians feel that their hospitals/facilities do not take sufficient effective action to prevent violence, the highest decrease in the health and safety area for Interior Health with scores shifting downward from 60% in 2020 to 54% this year.
- Physicians reported their work/life balance has been impacted negatively, with scores moving down by 5% since 2020, from 59% to 54% in 2021.

Trust Between Physicians and Medical Leaders	2021	2020 Difference
Physicians and medical leaders trust one another in my health authority.*	40%	-
Physicians and medical leaders trust one another in my hospital/facility.*	58%	-

* New question for 2021.

Key Observation

- Trust between physicians and medical leaders is higher at the local level than regionally (58% and 40%).

REGIONAL OVERVIEW

ISLAND HEALTH



Engagement	2021	2020 Difference	Provincial Average
I am satisfied with this health authority as a place to practice medicine.	54%	-5%	60%
I feel I belong to a collaborative, patient-centered team/unit.	60%	+1%	61%
I have access to the facilities, equipment, and other resources I require to meet patients' needs.	47%	-4%	52%
I have adequate opportunities to improve patient care, quality, and safety.	44%	-6%	49%
I have meaningful input into changes affecting my practice environment.	31%	-3%	37%
Senior leaders communicate the health authority's plans to physicians in a clear and timely way.	29%	+3%	35%
Senior leaders seek physicians' input when setting the health authority's goals.	21%	+2%	26%
Senior leaders' decision-making is transparent to physicians.	13%	+2%	18%
This health authority values physicians' contributions.	31%	+5%	37%

Key Observations

- Island Health was the only health authority that did not see a decrease in their overall score in 2021, remaining at 37%.
- However, overall satisfaction as a place to practice medicine decreased by 5%, down 54% from 59% in 2020.
- Notably, senior leadership scores increased between 2%-3% marking a positive change among the region's leadership and physicians.

Physicians Feeling Valued	2021	2020 Difference
This health authority values physicians' contributions.	31%	+5%
This hospital/facility values physicians' contributions.*	45%	-

* New question for 2021.

Key Observations

- Physicians feel more valued for their contributions in Island Health than they did in 2020, with scores up by 5%. This was also the highest increase among all health authorities this year, with others increasing by 1%-3%.
- However, the difference between feeling valued for contributions at the local level is significantly higher than the regional level at 45% and 31%, respectively.

Physician Health and Safety	2021	2020 Difference
I have been involved in, or impacted by a physical safety or psychological safety issue or incident at my current hospital/facility/practice.	50%	+3%
This hospital/facility takes effective action to prevent violence in the workplace.	50%	-8%
This hospital/facility takes effective action to promote a healthy and safe workplace.	46%	-4%
People treat each other with respect and consideration in our workplace.	72%	+2%
I am able to reasonably balance the demands of work and personal life.	48%	-8%
People from all backgrounds are treated fairly in our workplace.	63%	-2%
My hospital/facility deals effectively with situations that may threaten or harm employees (e.g., harassment, discrimination, violence).	39%	-2%

Key Observations

- Physicians feel that their hospitals/facilities do not take sufficient effective action to prevent violence, with scores shifting downward from 58% in 2020 to 50% in 2021.
- Physicians reported their work/life balance has been impacted negatively, with scores moving down by 8% since 2020, from 56% to 48% in 2021.

Trust Between Physicians and Medical Leaders	2021	2020 Difference
Physicians and medical leaders trust one another in my health authority.*	30%	-
Physicians and medical leaders trust one another in my hospital/facility.*	48%	-

* New question for 2021.

Key Observation

- Physicians trust their medical leaders more at the local level with scores significantly higher than the regional level at 48% and 30%, respectively.

REGIONAL OVERVIEW

NORTHERN HEALTH



Engagement	2021	2020 Difference	Provincial Average
I am satisfied with this health authority as a place to practice medicine.	55%	-7%	60%
I feel I belong to a collaborative, patient-centered team/unit.	58%	-9%	61%
I have access to the facilities, equipment, and other resources I require to meet patients' needs.	44%	-3%	52%
I have adequate opportunities to improve patient care, quality, and safety.	46%	-7%	49%
I have meaningful input into changes affecting my practice environment.	38%	-9%	37%
Senior leaders communicate the health authority's plans to physicians in a clear and timely way.	32%	+2%	35%
Senior leaders seek physicians' input when setting the health authority's goals.	30%	-2%	26%
Senior leaders' decision-making is transparent to physicians.	19%	+2%	18%
This health authority values physicians' contributions.	40%	+1%	37%

Key Observations

- Physicians feel like they have fewer opportunities to improve patient care, quality, and safety as compared to 2020 (46% vs 53%).
- There was a significant decrease since 2020 to physicians feeling like they belong to a collaborative team (67% down to 58%).
- More physicians indicate that senior leaders communicate the health authority's plans to them clearly and in a timely way, with scores increasing to 32% from 30% in 2020.

Physicians Feeling Valued	2021	2020 Difference
This health authority values physicians' contributions.	40%	+1%
This hospital/facility values physicians' contributions.*	56%	-

* New question for 2021.

Key Observation

- Physicians feel more valued for their contributions at the local level, with scores significantly higher than at the regional level at 56% and 40%, respectively.

Physician Health and Safety	2021	2020 Difference
I have been involved in, or impacted by a physical safety or psychological safety issue or incident at my current hospital/facility/practice.	57%	+3%
This hospital/facility takes effective action to prevent violence in the workplace.	43%	-16%
This hospital/facility takes effective action to promote a healthy and safe workplace.	40%	-6%
People treat each other with respect and consideration in our workplace.	62%	-5%
I am able to reasonably balance the demands of work and personal life.	44%	-13%
People from all backgrounds are treated fairly in our workplace.	53%	-13%
My hospital/facility deals effectively with situations that may threaten or harm employees (e.g., harassment, discrimination, violence).	39%	-8%

Key Observations

- Northern Health has the highest drop (-16%) among all survey questions in all regions, indicating that hospitals/facilities do not sufficiently take effective action to prevent violence, from 59% in 2020 down to 43% this year.
- Physicians reported their work/life balance has been impacted negatively, the highest decline among all health authorities since 2020, from 57% to 44% in 2021.

Trust Between Physicians and Medical Leaders	2021	2020 Difference
Physicians and medical leaders trust one another in my health authority.*	36%	-
Physicians and medical leaders trust one another in my hospital/facility.*	50%	-

* New question for 2021.

Key Observation

- Trust between physicians and medical leaders at a regional level is lower than trust between medical leaders at a local/site level.

REGIONAL OVERVIEW

PROVINCIAL HEALTH SERVICES AUTHORITY



Engagement	2021	2020 Difference	Provincial Average
I am satisfied with this health authority as a place to practice medicine.	56%	0%	60%
I feel I belong to a collaborative, patient-centered team/unit.	65%	+3%	61%
I have access to the facilities, equipment, and other resources I require to meet patients' needs.	54%	-7%	52%
I have adequate opportunities to improve patient care, quality, and safety.	51%	0%	49%
I have meaningful input into changes affecting my practice environment.	33%	-2%	37%
Senior leaders communicate the health authority's plans to physicians in a clear and timely way.	33%	+2%	35%
Senior leaders seek physicians' input when setting the health authority's goals.	19%	+3%	26%
Senior leaders' decision-making is transparent to physicians.	15%	+1%	18%
This health authority values physicians' contributions.	27%	+1%	37%

Key Observations

- Physicians indicate they feel they have less access or resources to meet their patients' needs than last year, with a decrease of 7% since 2020 (from 61% to 54%).
- PHSA is the only health authority that did not see a change to the overall satisfaction with practicing medicine, remaining at 56%.

Physicians Feeling Valued	2021	2020 Difference
This health authority values physicians' contributions.	27%	+1%
This hospital/facility values physicians' contributions.*	43%	-

* New question for 2021.

Key Observation

- Physicians feel more valued for their contributions at the local level with scores significantly higher than the regional level at 43% and 27%, respectively. However, PHSA is considerably lower than most regions this year, at 27%.

Physician Health and Safety	2021	2020 Difference
I have been involved in, or impacted by a physical safety or psychological safety issue or incident at my current hospital/facility/practice.	53%	+10%
This hospital/facility takes effective action to prevent violence in the workplace.	63%	-6%
This hospital/facility takes effective action to promote a healthy and safe workplace.	52%	-3%
People treat each other with respect and consideration in our workplace.	66%	-10%
I am able to reasonably balance the demands of work and personal life.	45%	-3%
People from all backgrounds are treated fairly in our workplace.	59%	-9%
My hospital/facility deals effectively with situations that may threaten or harm employees (e.g., harassment, discrimination, violence).	44%	-3%

Key Observations

- More physicians report being involved or impacted by physical or psychological safety incidents, with a 10% increase since 2020 (43% to 53%).
- Physicians also noted that respect and fair treatment are rising issues with lower agreement scores since 2020, from 68% down to 59% in 2021.

Trust Between Physicians and Medical Leaders	2021	2020 Difference
Physicians and medical leaders trust one another in my health authority.*	31%	-
Physicians and medical leaders trust one another in my hospital/facility.*	48%	-

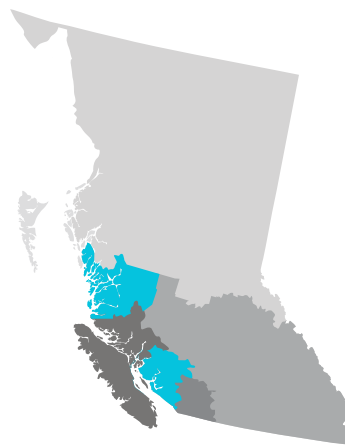
* New question for 2021.

Key Observation

- Trust between physicians and medical leaders is higher at a local level in comparison to trust with medical leaders at a regional level.

REGIONAL OVERVIEW

VANCOUVER COASTAL HEALTH



Engagement	2021	2020 Difference	Provincial Average
I am satisfied with this health authority as a place to practice medicine.	66%	-4%	60%
I feel I belong to a collaborative, patient-centered team/unit.	62%	-5%	61%
I have access to the facilities, equipment, and other resources I require to meet patients' needs.	55%	-1%	52%
I have adequate opportunities to improve patient care, quality, and safety.	52%	-8%	49%
I have meaningful input into changes affecting my practice environment.	40%	-3%	37%
Senior leaders communicate the health authority's plans to physicians in a clear and timely way.	40%	-3%	35%
Senior leaders seek physicians' input when setting the health authority's goals.	32%	-1%	26%
Senior leaders' decision-making is transparent to physicians.	23%	+1%	18%
This health authority values physicians' contributions.	43%	+3%	37%

Key Observations

- Overall engagement scores for VCH are higher than provincial averages, however some scores have decreased since 2020.
- More physicians feel that they do not have adequate opportunities to improve patient care since last year, with scores shifting down from 60% to 52% in 2021.

Physicians Feeling Valued	2021	2020 Difference
This health authority values physicians' contributions.	43%	+3%
This hospital/facility values physicians' contributions.*	53%	-

* New question for 2021.

Key Observation

- Physicians feel more valued for their contributions in Vancouver Coastal Health than they did in 2020, with scores up by 3%. However, the difference between feeling valued for contributions at the local level is higher than the regional level at 53% and 43%, respectively.

Physician Health and Safety	2021	2020 Difference
I have been involved in, or impacted by a physical safety or psychological safety issue or incident at my current hospital/facility/practice.	51%	+7%
This hospital/facility takes effective action to prevent violence in the workplace.	56%	-3%
This hospital/facility takes effective action to promote a healthy and safe workplace.	56%	-3%
People treat each other with respect and consideration in our workplace.	75%	+1%
I am able to reasonably balance the demands of work and personal life.	51%	-4%
People from all backgrounds are treated fairly in our workplace.	72%	0%
My hospital/facility deals effectively with situations that may threaten or harm employees (e.g., harassment, discrimination, violence).	50%	+2%

Key Observations

- More physicians report being involved or impacted by physical or psychological safety incidents, with a 7% increase since 2020 (44% to 51%).
- Physicians reported their work/life balance has been impacted negatively, with a decrease by 4% since 2020, from 55% to 51% in 2021.

Trust Between Physicians and Medical Leaders	2021	2020 Difference
Physicians and medical leaders trust one another in my health authority.*	42%	-
Physicians and medical leaders trust one another in my hospital/facility.*	55%	-

* New question for 2021.

Key Observation

- Trust between physicians and medical leaders is higher at a local level in comparison to trust between physicians and medical leaders at a regional level.

PHYSICIANS IN THEIR OWN WORDS

“Listen to physician ideas and actually try them.”

“Actually listening to recommendations from physicians regarding clinic and program modifications. It feels as if you are asked to participate in order for a tick box to be filled and input not actually valued.”

“Health authority could address the results of this survey directly with physicians and have a dialogue on why the results are what they are, and if they plan on making any changes as a result of the survey results.”

“Continue to disseminate information to medical staff and solicit input as timely and transparently as possible.”

“The psychological and morale distress that physicians face with increased workload and limited resources is very stressful for physicians... medical leadership would have more trust and buy-in from physicians if they recognized and validated this openly, rather than just talking about what ways they are trying to address it in the more distant future.”

“As a physician, I feel unnoticed. Not much recognition for the tough work being done.”

METHODOLOGY, RESPONSE RATES, AND DEMOGRAPHICS

The survey was conducted by external polling firm, TWI Surveys, from September 13, to October 13, 2021. It was sent to 12,112 members, of which 3,301 physicians responded, resulting in a response rate of 27%.

The survey used 19 questions with a 5-point Likert scale, adopting questions from HSO's (Health Standards Organization) Physician Work Life Pulse Tool and the Guarding Minds Survey. The analysis is presented in an agree, neutral, disagree format.

The overall data is valid 99 times out of 100 with a margin of error of +/- 1.92%. All percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole number. Sample sizes for the demographic breakdowns are included in some of the charts below and are outlined in detail in the [Supplemental Report](#).

All individual responses and comments are anonymous and confidential. Open ended comments have been themes and summarized to reflect physician feedback.

NOTE (August 2025): The methodology for score calculations in 2020 differs slightly to how it is calculated in subsequent years. A variance between 1%-2% can be assumed in this report.

Response Rates	2021	2020	Difference
First Nations Health Authority*	3	5	-2
Fraser Health Authority	758	735	+23
Interior Health Authority	617	563	+54
Island Health Authority	649	650	-1
Northern Health Authority	179	152	+27
Provincial Health Services Authority	188	175	+13
Vancouver Coastal Health Authority	907	920	-13

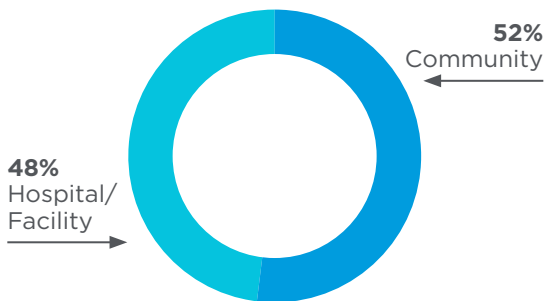
* Due to a small sample size and comparative purposes, First Nations Health Authority data has been removed in this report.

METHODOLOGY, RESPONSE RATES, AND DEMOGRAPHICS

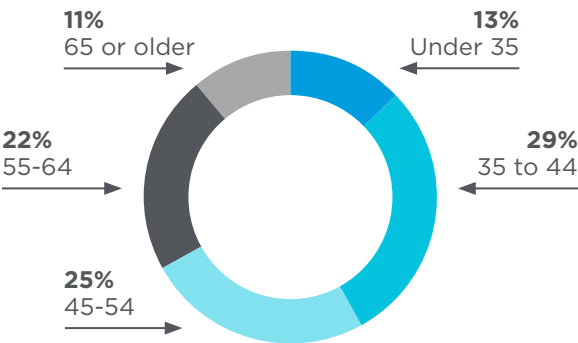
Family Physicians or Specialists



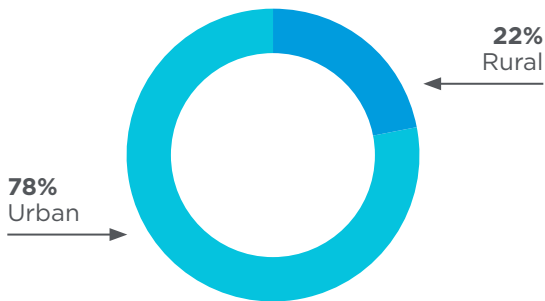
Hospital/Facility or Community Based



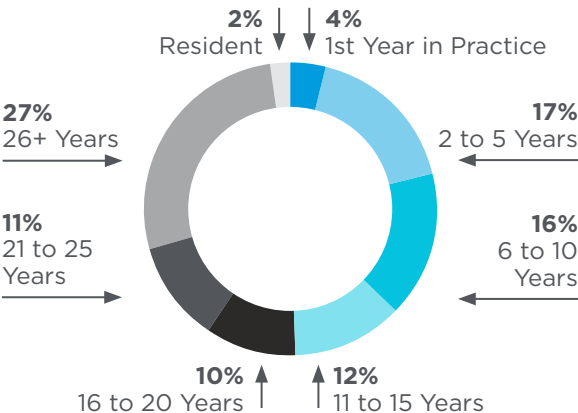
Age



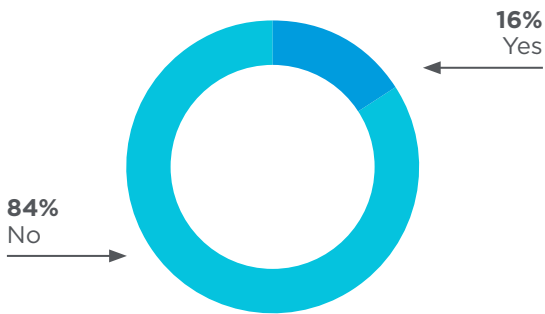
Setting



Tenure



Medical Leadership



METHODOLOGY, RESPONSE RATES, AND DEMOGRAPHICS

NEW QUESTIONS (OPTIONAL)

*Gender Identity (N=3143)	n	%
Non-Binary	13	0.4%
**Two-Spirit	-	-
Man	1582	50.3%
Woman	1425	45.3%
**Transgender	-	-
Cisgender	229	7.3%
**Another gender	-	-
Prefer not to answer	91	2.9%

*Background (N=3141)	n	%
Indigenous	40	1.3%
Black	43	1.4%
East Asian	414	13.2%
Southeast Asian	42	1.3%
Latina/o	24	0.8%
Middle Eastern	95	3.0%
South Asian	283	9.0%
White	2105	67.0%
Another/specific identity	77	2.5%
Prefer not to answer	123	3.9%

**Check all that apply*

***n<10*

CONCLUDING REMARKS

This year, Doctors of BC noted the largest number of participating physicians in this annual survey. As we heard in the feedback, physicians are an essential voice influencing the quality of patient care, but far too often they don't feel like they have been heard.

It is clear that the pandemic and the current environment are impacting physicians. Both front line physicians and physician leaders are providing care and support in difficult circumstances. It is also clear that physicians remain dedicated to their patients, their colleagues and their health care teams. However the current environment is placing a strain on their ability to provide care and engage effectively.

It is incumbent on all leaders within the BC healthcare system to take the results from this survey seriously. This means revisiting and revitalizing engagement efforts, creating further opportunities to involve physicians in decision making, and recognizing how they contribute to the care of all British Columbians.

We are thankful to our members for trusting us with their feedback. We are committed to sharing their candid views with all stakeholders for the betterment of patients and the wellness of our physicians.

A Supplemental Report with detailed breakdowns, including medical leadership, facility and division level results is also available and can be [accessed through this link](#).

Overall, this report is one of many tools that physicians, health authorities, and government can use to help support collaboration, engagement and quality improvements for the health system.

If you have any questions or comments regarding the survey results and next steps, please contact advocacy@doctorsofbc.ca

Sincerely,
Doctors of BC

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