



2023 HEALTH AUTHORITY ENGAGEMENT SURVEY

Physicians speak up
about workplace
challenges

WHAT WE HEARD

All Doctors of BC members were invited to participate. Across the province, 2,625 members (20%) shared 6,255 comments, and ranked statements that encompassed 17 questions.



The results of the 2023 Health Authority Engagement Survey show downward trends in most areas, reflecting the challenges faced by the health care system and physicians alike. Physicians recorded declines in overall workplace satisfaction, decreasing opportunities to improve care, and a lack of tools to do their job well. Historically strong survey responses, such as feeling like members belong to a collaborative team, or treat each other with respect and consideration are also eroding, reflecting the challenging conditions of delivering care.

Members provided more than 6,200 comments to open-ended questions this year. These comments revealed that for many members, the biggest priorities and concerns in their hospital are:

39% Staffing needs
(more doctors, nurses, support staff)

32% Specific care needs
(access to specialists, community care, diagnostics)

25% Resources and infrastructure
(beds, CT scanners, ultrasound machines)



Less than half of members agree that they are satisfied with their health authority as a place to practice medicine.



Under 60% of members surveyed feel that they belong to a collaborative, team-centred unit.



Six in 10 members feel that senior Health Authority leaders don't seek their input or aren't being transparent.

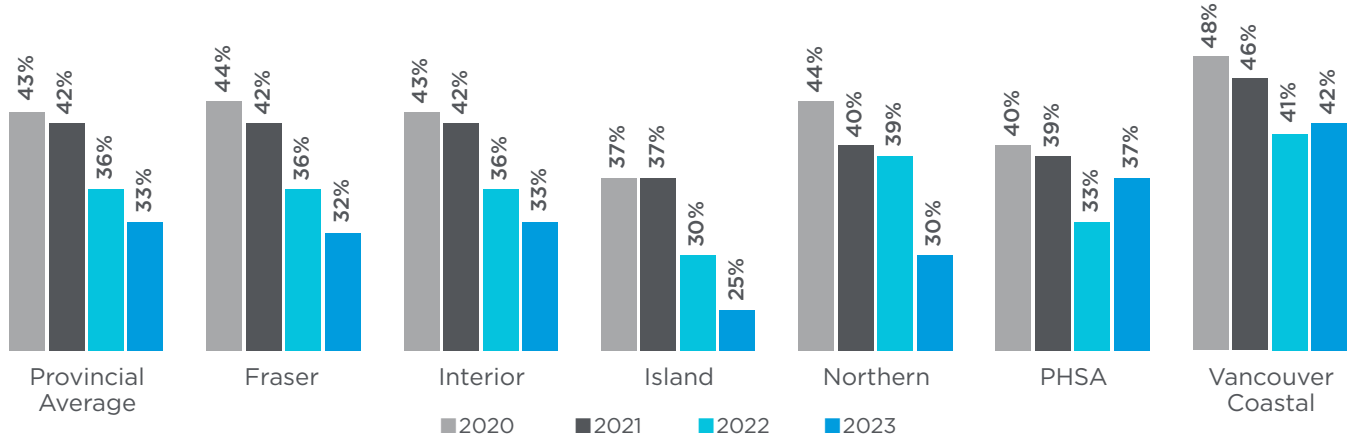


Three in 10 members agree that physicians and medical leaders trust each other. Only four in 10 members agree that they have the tools to do their job.

Doctors of BC has heard member concerns about these complex matters, and is working on tangible actions to improve specific issues raised by physicians. A major focus of the new Doctors of BC Strategic Plan involves fostering discussions in early 2024 between Doctors of BC, senior health authority leaders, and medical staff associations (MSAs) to improve conditions.

Engagement Trends

Each year, Doctors of BC asks members benchmark questions, which are indicators of engagement. The following chart outlines the overall average of each of the nine engagement questions, along with trends over time.*



* Due to a small sample size (<5 responses) and for comparative purposes, First Nations Health Authority data has been removed in this report.

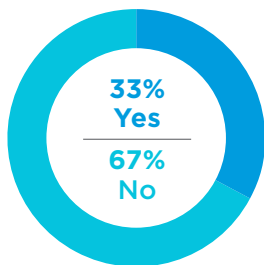
PHSA was the only health authority that saw notable improvements. Vancouver Coastal held a relatively consistent overall score, while the remaining health authorities saw reductions in overall agreement scores.

Physician health and safety trends

A downward trend has emerged over the past four years regarding safety. No more than 40% of physicians agree that their hospital/facility deals effectively with situations that may threaten or harm employees (a decrease of 7% over the past two years). Some findings include:

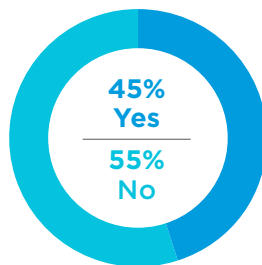
1. **Fewer members** reported experiencing physical or psychological safety incidents, but those that did experienced them **more often**.
2. A review of physician comments showed that physical safety incidents are more likely to occur in the context of specific locations, such as emergency rooms.
3. Psychological safety incidents are most often associated with interactions with patients, or their families. Members also shared experiences of challenges with colleagues, other care providers, and administration as the source of bullying or intimidation.

Experienced a physical safety incident:



Of those who experienced an incident(s), 83% were in the range of 1-10 incidents.

Experienced a psychological safety incident:



Of those who experienced an incident(s), 76% were in the range of 1-10 incidents.

Physicians in their own words

The survey allowed for personal comments from participants. Below are a few examples of more than 6,200 comments we received:

"Having to 'lock down' other patients on a psychiatry ward because of a lack of locked beds for the violent patients because all those beds are full. Having to put patients who should be in a locked room into physical restraints when we don't have locked rooms for them as they are full..."

"(We need) leadership to be open and truthful. Asking for input and then doing nothing/carrying their own agenda is distressing to all of us."

"Significant downloading of duties onto physicians, and poor support for medical care of patients. Basically, have physicians doing onerous paperwork and admin type work instead of the valuable work of patient care that we are trained to do."

What was the goal of this survey?

Doctors of BC has measured levels of engagement between BC physicians and their respective health authority for the last eight years. The Doctors of BC Health Authority Engagement Survey, which is the largest of its kind in Canada, provides the opportunity for members to share their thoughts on health and safety, trust, and leadership in the workplace. These results in turn help inform important discussions between Doctors of BC, health authorities, the Ministry of Health, BC's doctors, and other key partners.

How did we seek member input?

All actively practicing members received an email inviting them to participate in the online survey, conducted September 12 – October 11, 2023 by external polling firm TWI Surveys.

What did we ask?

The same set of questions have been asked annually since 2016 to benchmark results and track trends over time. Topics include senior leadership transparency, opportunities for input and collaboration, and satisfaction with workplace and patient care. We also asked a set of questions regarding Physician Health and Safety, with topics including promoting a healthy and safe work environment, preventing violence, and work/life balance.

Who participated in the survey?

- 2,625 members, 20% response rate
- Regional health authority breakdown (n):
 - Fraser (FHA): 565
 - First Nations (FNHA): 4
 - Interior (IHA): 477
 - Island (IH): 583
 - Northern (NHA): 132
 - Provincial Health Services (PHSA): 168
 - Vancouver Coastal (VCH): 696



Type of practice

48% FP
52% SP



Practice setting

Community Based 48%
Hospital/Facility Based 52%



Geographic setting

Urban 78%
Rural 23%






Response rate

20%

WHAT'S NEXT

- Detailed Summary and Supplemental Reports will be released in early February 2024 providing robust responses to the Survey questions. They will include breakdowns by health authority, facility/hospital, community/divisions, medical leadership, along with other useful demographics.
- Doctors of BC staff members will present the results of this year's Survey to members, health authorities, and the Ministry of Health over the next several months.
- Doctors of BC will continue to use these Survey results to inform our ongoing advocacy efforts on behalf of our members, to help foster positive change in the healthcare system.
- In addition, Doctors of BC senior staff will be specifically meeting with health authorities and medical staff associations to help inform an action plan around the challenges members are facing.

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