



**Speak out  
for family medicine  
PRIORITIZING  
PATIENT CARE**

#bcdocscare

2024 Election Advocacy Toolkit





## Let's make healthcare work for everyone

Patients are at the centre of everything that you do as family doctors. When you're not appropriately supported and resourced, it impacts the quality of care your patients receive.

Right now, family medicine in British Columbia (BC) is at a crossroads. Significant strides have been made in the past 18 months, yet the primary healthcare crisis in BC still looms large, with an estimated 700,000 British Columbians still without a family doctor.

Since the introduction of the Longitudinal Family Physician (LFP) Payment Model in February 2023, BC has attracted more than 820 new longitudinal family physicians and more than 200,000 patients have been connected with a vital family doctor. BC is now leading the way in improving access to primary care and amplifying the unique role of family physicians.

As family doctors, you've told us you now have hope for your patients and for the future of family medicine. You've also said more needs to be done.

## JOIN US

[BC Family Doctors](#) and the [BC College of Family Physicians](#) are asking you to join us in advocating for change.

The upcoming provincial election will impact funding, patient care, and working conditions for you and your patients.

Our toolkit provides guidance on how to share your story in your own voice and push for necessary changes.

[#bcdocscare](#)

**“I think we are at a crossroads of finally getting our voices heard.**

Now we need the resources and supports to care for our patients, run our practices, and most importantly, care for ourselves and our families.”

**Dr. Maryam Zeineddin**  
President



“We’re excited to team up with BC Family Doctors to provide a united voice for family physicians across BC and to ensure family medicine is a key priority for the political platforms ahead of the election.

**Together, let’s make our voices heard.”**

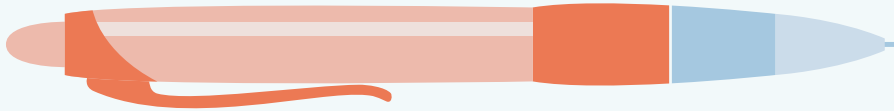
**Dr. Vincent Wong**  
President



BC COLLEGE OF  
FAMILY PHYSICIANS  
*The home of family medicine*

# Family doctors in BC by the numbers

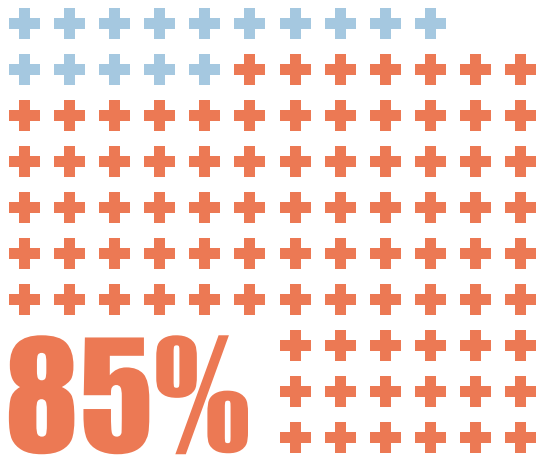
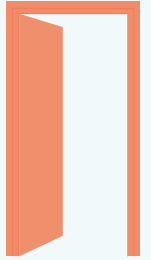
**75%** of family doctors said reducing administrative burden is a top priority



\* Source: BC College of Family Physicians member survey

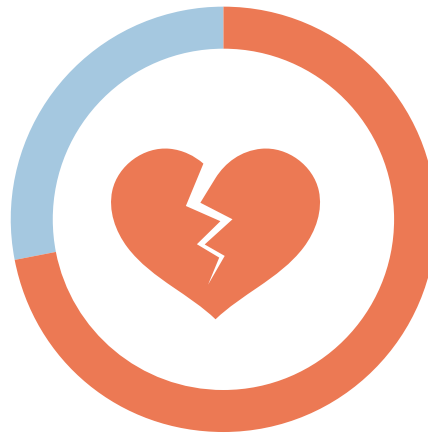
Almost **40%**

of family doctors surveyed plan to retire or reduce clinical duties

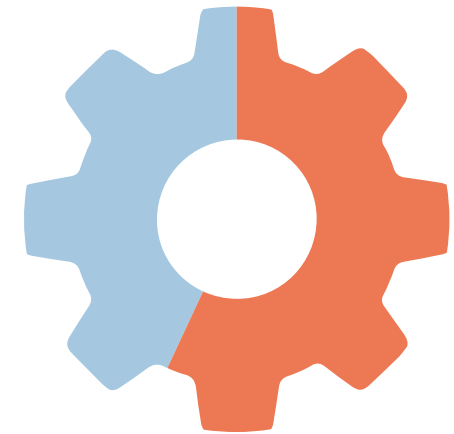


**85%** of family doctors say they lack extended health and dental benefits

\* Source: BC Family Doctors member survey



**72%** of family doctors do not feel respected



**57%** of family doctors say they don't have fair working conditions

**48%**

of Canadian doctors show high rates of depression



**53%**

of Canadian doctors show high rates of burnout

\* Source: Canadian Medical Association

# Our asks

Here are three key messages you can use to share your concerns and your solutions for the future of family medicine.

## 1. Patients before paperwork

Stop the forms! Family doctors are drowning in paperwork and time-consuming administrative tasks. These include charting, writing referral letters, filling out forms, writing sick notes, and managing everyday business issues. Many forms are about meeting employer or government needs rather than a patient's health concern.

These ever-increasing administrative burdens take time away from caring for your patients. To have a healthy and stable primary care system, we need to reduce your administrative burdens and increase professional fulfillment for the family physicians at the centre of the system.

### We're asking for

- Improvements to the Special Authority Pharmacare process and lifting responsibility for Special Authority forms from family doctors.
- Legislation to eliminate employer sick note requests for short illnesses.
- A coordinated approach to adopting and funding EMRs (electronic medical records).

## QUICK GUIDE

1. Our asks
2. Take action
  - a. Talk to your local candidates
  - b. Share your story
  - c. Amplify your voice

## DOWNLOAD OUR SICK NOTE TEMPLATE!

If you haven't already, [get the Sick Note template here.](#)

# Our asks

## 2. Respect and representation

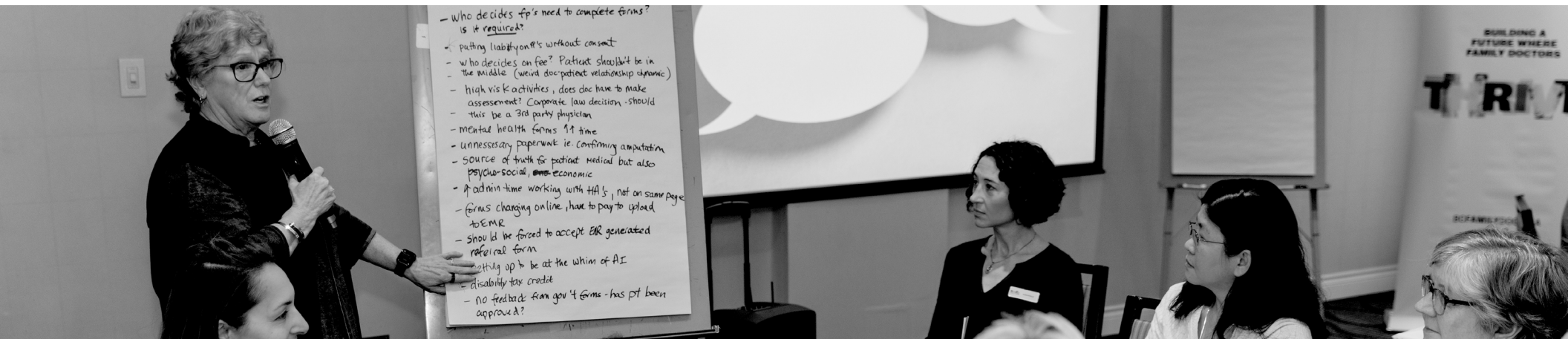
Family doctors play a vital role in providing comprehensive, relationship-based care. You need to be respected and recognized as specialists in family medicine. You want your work to be valued, and your health to be supported. You need to have opportunities to advocate for yourselves and your patients. Your voice is indispensable to a thriving healthcare system.

### We're asking for

- A seat at decision-making tables to create opportunities for family doctors' voices to be heard and to contribute to healthcare policies.
- Access to basic employment standards and benefits like other healthcare workers, including paid sick time, vacation/locum coverage, extended health and dental benefits, and a pension plan.

## QUICK GUIDE

1. Our asks
2. Take action
  - a. Talk to your local candidates
  - b. Share your story
  - c. Amplify your voice



# Our asks

## 3. Business and practice supports

The rising costs of business and inadequate support for family medicine clinics is overwhelming. You are ready for team-based care but don't feel supported to succeed. Administrative burdens extend your workday, contributing to burnout and making work-life balance impossible.

Your health and wellbeing should be valued in the same way it is for your patients. We need to better resource physicians and family medicine clinics for the foundational role and infrastructure provided to our healthcare system. Let's create a healthcare environment that enables everyone to thrive.

### We're asking for

- Funding and support for team-based care in family medicine clinics, enabling better patient access to care through the addition of nursing and allied care providers.
- Funding for the business costs of community-based family medicine clinics (staffing, medical supplies, equipment and IT).

## QUICK GUIDE

1. Our asks
2. Take action
  - a. Talk to your local candidates
  - b. Share your story
  - c. Amplify your voice

# Take action

## 1. Talk to your local candidates

One good way to get your message across is to meet with the people running for election in your local riding. Candidates are eager to meet with voters during the election period. It's a good time to speak up about the issues facing you and your patients.

They may come to your door, or you may run into them out in the community at a local event. You can also make an appointment to meet with candidates at their campaign offices to share your perspective and ask them their views.

The election period officially starts September 21, 2024. If you want to meet with your current MLA, make an appointment at their constituency office before then. After September 21, all MLAs become candidates, and you'll need to make an appointment to see all candidates at their campaign office.

### If you want to meet your candidates during the campaign:

1. Contact the campaign office and ask to speak to the campaign or office manager. Find your candidate [here](#).
2. Tell them you are a family doctor and explain what you would like to talk to the candidate about.
3. Read our asks and be ready to share them concisely. Personal stories from your own experience will emphasize your points.
4. Be respectful and collaborative, even if you disagree. Remember, you are building a relationship. You'll want an opportunity to continue this conversation in the future.
5. Take a picture with the candidate to post on social media. Use the [#bcdocscare](#) hashtag to make your post easier to find.
6. Follow up with a thank you note or email after the meeting.

## QUICK GUIDE

1. Our asks
2. Take action
  - a. Talk to your local candidates
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\*Visit Doctors of BC's [website](#) for their provincial election advocacy resource, *Temperature Rising*, to learn more about where each provincial party stands on healthcare.





## Questions to ask candidates

### **Patients before paperwork**

1. How will you reduce the paperwork and administrative tasks that take my time away from patient care?
2. Will you introduce or support legislation to eliminate sick notes for short illnesses?
3. Would you support streamlining the paperwork required for patients to receive coverage of medications, including transferring responsibility for these “Special Authority” forms from family doctors to lighten their workload?

### **Respect and representation**

1. How can family doctors have a bigger role in healthcare policies and decision-making?
2. Do you support providing paid sick days, vacation coverage, and extended health/dental benefits for family doctors?

### **Business and practice supports**

1. What will you do to help family doctors manage the rising costs of running a clinic?
2. How will you make sure family doctors can bring on nurses and other healthcare providers to improve access for patients?
3. What will you do to ensure electronic medical records and other digital tools are adopted and funded in BC?

# Take action

## 2. Share your story

We understand that meeting with candidates seems time-consuming, and many of you simply don't have time to give. You can still make yourself heard by sharing your experiences in your community. Write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper.

We've set up a template for you to personalize with your own story.

[This tool will automatically submit your letter to your local paper.](#)

## QUICK GUIDE

1. Our asks
2. Take action
  - a. Talk to your local candidates
  - b. Share your story
  - c. Amplify your voice



## GET MEDIA TRAINING!

Become a spokesperson for your profession. Learn how to deal with the media and speak out about the issues that concern you and your patients.

[Register for our joint media training webinar September 11 at 6 pm.](#) This 1.5 hour webinar will help you tell your story effectively and engage your audience with confidence. Don't miss this opportunity to enhance your media skills and make your voice heard!

# Take action

## 3. Amplify your voice

Make an impact by sharing your story through social media. We've made some [graphics for you to share](#), or you can simply share your own thoughts and experiences.

Some tips on creating effective social media posts:

- Post infographics and key statistics from the toolkit, such as the percentage of family doctors lacking benefits or feeling overburdened by paperwork. Visuals make the information more digestible and shareable.
- Share stories about your experiences with paperwork, lack of support and respect. Personal stories boost your message.
- Include the [#bcdocscare](#) hashtag in your posts. This will make it easier for others to find and join the conversation.
- Tag candidates and stakeholders in your posts to increase the chance of your message being seen and encourage engagement.

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1. Our asks
2. Take action
  - a. Talk to your local candidates
  - b. Share your story
  - c. Amplify your voice



# Working together for you.

#bcdocscare



## About BC Family Doctors

We are the economic and political voice of family doctors in BC. For over 30 years, we have advocated for the economic and professional well-being of our profession. Our purpose is to build an environment where family doctors thrive.

We represent you at tables where the voices of family doctors need to be heard. We ensure family doctors have the accurate and timely resources and tools they need for proper billing, including updating fee schedules by payment model. Most importantly, we work to improve the system of care for patients and physicians.

[bcfamilydocs.ca](http://bcfamilydocs.ca)



## About the BC College of Family Physicians

The BC College of Family Physicians (BCCFP) is a passionate, independent champion for family medicine, bolstering the unique and irreplaceable role of family physicians within BC's health care system.

With a strong position of advocacy, data-informed practice, and a focus on community building, we empower, connect, and advocate to amplify the individual and collective experiences of family physicians and advance the field of family medicine.

We're working towards a future where every individual across BC receives comprehensive, compassionate, and culturally safe health care from a trusted family physician.

[bccfp.bc.ca](http://bccfp.bc.ca)