



Dr. Vishal Bhella

As we face and ultimately transition out of the COVID-19 pandemic, there will be impacts on our profession and health care system that will potentially change the way we practice and view health care delivery. Below, I have highlighted 3 priority areas - developing national guidance on health care delivery, supporting physician leadership in the health care system and supporting the wellness of physicians.

1. Developing national guidance on health care delivery

The majority of our profession and Canadians as a whole value the publicly funded universal health care system we have. There have always been challenges within the system, although no single delivery model is perfect. There are challenges that arise from political viewpoints, policy decisions and system resources that can be perceived as a threat to our health care delivery model. The pandemic has also shown some cracks in the system but also enabled regions to rise to the opportunity to respond to those challenges and deliver health care in novel ways. As we move forward from the pandemic, we need a unified voice, and national guidance on how our health care system can respond to the evolving needs of Canadians, the continuing advent of technology and the need for integrated health care delivery with seamless transitions between primary care and other health care delivery settings. The CMA can and should be leading these conversations.

2. Supporting physician leadership in the health care system

Physicians have historically been looked at as leaders in health care. However, there are many players in making decisions on how health care delivery occurs, including political and bureaucratic policy, regional leadership coordinating health care delivery, institutional leaders developing regional and local policy, and clinic based leaders including physician medical leads and clinical managers. Physicians need to continue to be able to bring their wealth of expertise in the complexities of how clinical care is delivered in individual settings as well as communities and regions. However, for physician voices to be heard, we need to continue to support their leadership development to be able to effectively navigate the numerous layers involved in health care services planning and delivery and ensure those impacted by decisions on health care delivery have a voice in making the decisions.

3. Supporting the wellness of physicians

This is an area the CMA has identified as an important area to provide resources and support to members. The COVID-19 pandemic makes this even more important as many including our physician colleagues have struggled throughout the pandemic. Part of supporting wellness involves providing the resources to build your own resiliency; however part of it also involves looking at the system factors that impact the wellness of the providers within it. As we look at health care delivery as a whole, we also need to ensure the wellness of the providers is supported in the way health care delivery moves forward (the 4th aspect of the quadruple aim). Not only do we need to support physicians in their own well-being, but we also need to support them as leaders in addressing the wellness of their health care teams and in addressing the barriers to wellness in the systems in which they work.

Dr. Vishal Bhella

Dr. Vishal Bhella is a practicing family physician currently working as a Clinical Assistant Professor with the Department of Family Medicine at the University of Calgary at the South Health Campus Family Medicine Teaching Clinic, where he has practiced since early 2013. He previously completed medical school at McMaster University and residency training as well as an enhanced skills training year in Academic Family Medicine at Western University. His previous experiences prior to joining the academic teaching facility in Calgary included work in emergency, inpatient hospital medicine and at a Community Health Centre providing care to an underserved patient population.

Vishal has been actively involved in leadership and physician advocacy since his time in residency where he was a Board member of both the provincial and national residency associations. During his years in Alberta, he was the first chair of the Alberta College of Family Physicians' (ACFP) First Five Years in Practice Committee and has transitioned from ACFP Board member to President (2018-2021). He is also a current member of the CFPC's National Committee on Continuing Professional Development and the current Chair of the CFPC's chapter elected leaders' group.

Throughout his various roles, Vishal has been a member of over 30 Boards, committees and working groups over the past 10 years, including at the university, provincial and national level engaging with educational leadership, medical associations, regulatory colleges, the College of Family Physicians of Canada and provincial chapters as well as government representatives.