

Fostering advocacy of physician health and accessibility from training into practice

Favoriser la défense de la santé et de l'inclusion des médecins, de la formation à la pratique

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Dear Editor,

As dedicated physician advocates, we read with interest the article published in this journal, "Exploring the perspectives of new-in-practice specialists about the Health Advocates role: 'I didn't even know where to start,'" by Cochrane et al.¹ The authors identified important themes relevant to new specialists interested in health advocacy. They concluded that system level advocacy training remains insufficient, and that physician advocates should be valued for their contributions.

As defined by the 2015 CANMEDs framework, physician advocates "contribute their expertise and influence as they work with communities or patient populations to improve health. They work with those they serve to determine and understand needs, speak on behalf of others when required, and support the mobilization of resources to effect change."²

In a renewed vision of health advocacy in medical education and clinical practice, we believe that further emphasis should be focused on the well-being and accessibility of our colleagues, in addition to our patients. As learners transition into practice, our medical associations are well situated to offer meaningful engagement to advance physician health and disability inclusion. We contributed to collaborations with the Ontario Medical Association (OMA) burnout task force, and

new resource outlining workplace accommodations for doctors with disability and chronic illness.³

As we improve system level advocacy training and opportunities for physicians, we should ensure that physician well-being and accommodating work environments are equally emphasized within the quadruple aim for health care improvement. By fostering more physician-advocates, we can advance the health, equity and inclusion of our profession.

Conflicts of Interest: Dr. Quon is the Co-Chair of the Recruit and Retain a Diverse Workforce Working Group for Canada's National Health Workforce Well-Being Plan and Member of the Accreditation Committee for the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada (RCPSC). He is a member of the Ontario Medical Association (OMA) Suicide Prevention Taskforce and worked as a consultant to the OMA Knowledge Translation office. He has received grants from The Ottawa Hospital Academic Medical Organization and the RCPSC. Dr. Gautam is CEO of PEAK MD Inc, through which she receives fees for academic grand rounds and conference keynote presentations, development and delivery of medical leadership development courses, health care consulting, and coaching physician leaders.

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