

What's in a name? "Doctors of BC" launches 3-year strategic plan

Your association is embarking on a new 3-year strategic plan, the result of a year-long process in which Board members weighed and prioritized the needs of the profession.

The most visible sign of change is our new name—Doctors of BC. But in reality, the changes are much deeper and more profound. I'd like to outline how we got where we are today, and how we plan to move forward. Then I'll talk a little bit more about the name change.

At the start of last year, staff at Doctors of BC held discussions with doctors (members and non members), residents and students, committee members, association staff, and the general public to get a full understanding of how you see the association and what you want from it.

You and your patients told us that you want us to make our profession more influential so we can help build a stronger health care system. You told us that you want us to do better when it comes to engagement—not just with you, but also by partnering with patients, government, health authorities, and other professionals to promote physician services in our communities and health care facilities. You told us you want us to be a stronger advocate for you, so that you can advocate for your patients and enhance your professional satisfaction.

We heard you, and that's where our new direction comes in. You will see in our strategic plan that Doctors of BC will continue to do the work we already do well—such as negotiations, member benefits, and member services—but we will do it in a way that is more engaged with our mem-

bers. The plan also shows where we will make significant strides forward in the areas of engagement, collaboration, innovation, and promoting physician leadership.

Our commitments include:

- Promoting two-way communications with members, being accessible to you and responding to your needs, and understanding and advancing the interests of the entire profession.
- Assisting you so you can provide the highest quality patient care in your communities through local initiatives such as Divisions of Family Practice and in new facilities-based programs to increase, influence, and strengthen our collective voice.
- Reinforcing engagement with partners by continuing to collaborate with government on the solid work of the joint committees and on the development and implementation of policies and programs that promote the best standard of health care. We will also advocate for increased health promotion of the population at large.

The key is engagement—when as physicians we are truly engaged and working together, we can bring about positive change.

Now, let's talk about the name change. Why did we do it? Based on our strategic plan work, the Board felt it was time for the organization representing you to be clear and direct about exactly who we are—the doctors of British Columbia. It tells the world we are ready to move forward in a positive and proactive way. It shows we are proud of our profession and confident in our ability to make a meaningful difference.

We also discovered in our research that the public had little or no under-

standing of the role and function of the BCMA. Our new name will help build a stronger connection with the public, which is necessary to help us become a more influential profession. In fact, once people were told what the BCMA represents, they saw a real need for us to advocate on matters of importance to patients and physicians.

There is a lot behind our name change—a lot of thought, strategizing, and the creation of a strong foundation for the future. For Doctors of BC, it's all about doctors working as partners to make a meaningful difference—for our patients, for our profession, and for the health care system as a whole. We are, indeed, better together.

For more information on the Doctors of BC strategic plan, go to www.doctorsofbc.ca.

—William Cunningham, MD
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