

## A year remembered

**E**very year when April arrives I like to take stock of things—organize my thoughts (and my life) for the upcoming spring and summer. This April I find this practice particularly timely as my term as president ends next month, and I'd like to share with you a few stories about the past year to give you a sense of the job and what it is like to have the privilege of representing you.

### Students and residents

Our new strategic plan emphasizes engagement with our members. One of our biggest gaps in this area pertains to our involvement with medical students. We have traditionally met with them in their first year of medical school and then only a few more times before they finish their residencies and start their practices. Medical students are the doctors of tomorrow and we want to do a better job engaging with them. With our strategic plan in place, we did not waste any time.

Doctors of BC is rolling out an ambitious student/resident engagement plan based on the framework of the strategic plan. We recently held our first mentorship event—Life in Medicine, an evening for medical students and physicians. Approximately 130 students and 11 physicians from different disciplines came together for a speed networking dinner at which physicians spoke about their work as ER doctors, surgeons, family doctors, and so on, and how their

work impacts their lives. We organized this event because we heard from students that they wanted more information before the residency match, and based on its success we will be organizing many more like it. And rest assured—residents who are reading this—we are planning some interesting engagement opportunities for the coming year based on what you told us about your needs. The conversations and discussions we've had at meetings throughout the year definitely get results.

### President's tour

This is the second year we've done a president's tour of the province to meet with members face-to-face. I think this is one of the most gratifying parts of the job. We've met doctors in urban settings, regional settings, and remote, rural British Columbia. We had many good conversations, and I appreciated the pointed questions I received from some of you. I think these meetings help us better understand what our members are looking for from us and I think, sometimes, it's the toughest discussions that will help us get there. I also like that as president I can point to the real, productive, and positive change within Doctors of BC and its influence on the health care system. While doctors across the various regions have slightly differing issues, everyone is united in one aspect—doctors are thoughtfully and genuinely caring for patients

and wanting to make the health care system better.

### The media

When it comes to engagement, we have another important audience—the public, which often gets its information from the media. Acting as spokesperson for the media is another one of my roles as president and I hit the ground running from the minute I started my term. The range of issues I've faced has been widespread: doctors and social media, electronic doctor's appointments, walk-in clinics, medical marijuana, the future of primary care, the contribution of specialists, and, most recently, the auditor general's report on compensation for physicians. Why is it so important for us to be heard on these and other issues? Because having the public's support is key to becoming more influential in helping to shape positive health care change.

When Doctors of BC talks about engagement, we mean it. We believe that engaged doctors are better able to make a meaningful difference in the lives of their patients, communities, and the health care system. And that's what it's really about. We have made some big strides in the last year and we're only just beginning. Stay tuned!

—William Cunningham, MD  
President, Doctors of BC

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