

## Your voice makes a difference and we want to hear it

**T**o be effective leaders in health care we, as doctors, must ensure that we lead the profession in a time of change. In the years ahead our profession will face many issues—issues that are becoming more complex and that we need to anticipate and be ready to proactively address. To ensure we are able to effectively respond to members' needs, maintain our strong position of influence among members and stakeholders, and continue to be relevant, the way in which we govern ourselves must evolve and change accordingly.

Our current governance structure is based on the traditional model for professional associations. The Board of Directors is one large governing body comprising 40 (mostly) elected physicians from around the province, including its officers. It is representative in terms of geography, and to a much smaller degree by area of practice, and is supported by a number of committees, specialty sections, societies, and councils. It is responsible for the overall stewardship of the Association, contract negotiations, and ensuring effective influence in health care policy, among many other duties.

The large Board structure that has served us well for decades is now creating challenges in an environment that now expects quick turnarounds, efficient decision making, and swift response to opportunities. There is also an element of perceived conflict of interest among Board members who may feel a legal responsibility to act in the best interests of doctors as a whole, but who are elected to act as representatives of a particular group. But in making a change, how can we ensure that representation from around the province is maintained? How can we ensure we have represen-

tation from different specialties? How can we ensure that democratic principles underpin the foundation? This is where you come in, and where your voice has an important role to play. Governance structures and processes define how your voice as a member is heard, so it is important your views are reflected in any changes moving forward.

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We are asking for your feedback on a recently released Doctors of BC consultation paper. This paper looks at a number of approaches to a change in governance structure that will better enable us to continue serving members' interests regardless of where in BC they live, what kind of medicine they practise, or what services and benefits they subscribe to.

The paper, titled "Every Voice Counts: Shaping the Future of our Association Together," outlines two alternatives to the current single large Board:

- Establishing a single, smaller Board.
- Establishing a dual structure comprising a smaller Board and a representative body.

Each alternative includes three

different models. These alternative structures are not a panacea; both pose opportunities and challenges, which prompt consideration. This is why I strongly encourage all members to care. I ask that you review the consultation paper posted on the Doctors of BC website and answer the accompanying few questions. Be sure your voice is heard so that others don't speak for you. We want to collaborate with members about the direction of our Association, to hear your perspective and your arguments, and to create a model together.

I'm not asking you to develop a passion on the topic of governance, but we know engaged physicians are better able to influence positive change, and we know the importance of collaborating with members on important issues. We also know that every voice really does make a difference—we saw this first hand in the last presidential election. So speak up and provide us with your feedback. We as an organization need to build on the momentum for change, and we need to do so collectively. That is why I strongly encourage all members to be partners in how we shape the future of our Association. Your voice truly does count.

—Charles Webb, MBCChB  
Doctors of BC President

**Your Voice.**  
**Your Future.**

Too much paperwork?  
Speak up

**GPSC**  
General Practice Services Committee

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