

Medical Student Orientation Day

For most of us the fall signifies a return to business as usual. But for almost 300 enthusiastic and eager first-year medical students it signifies something much more exciting: the beginning of a fascinating, life-altering journey. One we have all taken.

Each year in early September, Doctors of BC has the privilege of joining the Canadian Medical Association to present our Medical Student Orientation Day, also known as Backpack Day by the students. Serving as an introduction to Doctors of BC, this event begins a relationship that will last through medical school, residency, and into practice. At last month's event first-year medical students learned about the opportunities the association provides to them, including free membership while attending medical school, free disability insurance during their first year, and free advice on how to best manage their finances... but most important, they were able to pick up their iconic backpack. The backpacks are a different color each year, indicating which year of medical school the proud owner is in—a status symbol of sorts that is truly meaningful for students. This year's cohort walked out of the event with their purple backpacks already filled with books.

I remember my first days as a medical student. I was excited to start this new adventure, but I was also fearful and anxious of the unknown. And while today's students feel the same emotions, more than anything our young doctors of tomorrow are passionate and energetic. They are a group of brilliant and innovative individuals, and their focus is on making a positive difference in our health care system for our patients and for our profession. We as an association are

working to tap into this generation. We need to bring them on board, support them to become future doctors and leaders, and most of all, provide the foundation to let them flourish.

I am pleased that as an organization we are taking steps to support our young doctors of tomorrow on this journey. In addition to talking about

**Be a mentor
and help shape our
future doctors**

the many services we offer students we also provide them with meaningful opportunities for engagement and participation. For the first time medical students were invited to be part of the BC caucus that attended the CMA's General Council meeting this summer in Halifax. They were engaged and excited, and they got a taste of how important it is to be a leader when it comes to advocating

for patients, for themselves, and for the profession. Every year Doctors of BC also holds its Find Your Match networking/mentorship night in which medical students interact and engage with physicians from various specialties and discuss the experiences, challenges, and opportunities these seasoned physicians have had throughout their careers.

All young doctors starting out could benefit from being inspired, from having a mentor—someone to look up to. I certainly did. Each of us has our story about why we chose medicine, how we got to where we are, and who along the way had an impact on us. Each of us also has the ability to provide guidance to the future members of our profession.

One of my key priorities is recognizing and empowering our medical students and residents. They are the future of our profession and they are just embarking on their careers. I encourage you to get involved. Be a mentor and help shape our future doctors. It is important for them, but it is also important for our profession, for our patients, and for our health care system as a whole.

**—Charles Webb, MBCChB
Doctors of BC President**



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