



Maintaining your purpose during transformative times

To every physician on the front line—whether in a bustling urban hospital, in a small community clinic, or on call in a remote village—this is a time of transformation within British Columbia's health care system. Although it is also a time of strain, uncertainty, and fatigue, it's during these transformative times that your voice, resilience, and leadership are more vital than ever.

The past few years have tested our health care system in ways few could have imagined. From the relentless demands of the COVID-19 pandemic to rising patient complexity, staff shortages, and administrative burdens, the toll has been heavy. And just as the crisis began to ease, the system has entered yet another phase of change—this time in structure, leadership, and policy direction. These shifts bring added challenges and disruption and real personal cost.

Change is hard, but we've already seen firsthand the opportunity that lies within it. Telehealth, once a novelty, is now a mainstay, thanks to your adaptability. Integrated care models, like Foundry youth centres and rural primary care networks, work because of your willingness to collaborate, innovate, and lead. Through the years, one thing has remained constant: *you*. Your commitment—continuing to show up, not just as clinicians, but also as leaders. And your resilience—not just pushing through blindly, but also standing firm in your values, adapting when needed, and continuing to advocate for what's right for your patients, your colleagues, and yourself.

Even good change—change that aims to improve care—can create significant

emotional and mental strain. You are expected to adapt quickly, stay current, care deeply, and lead calmly, even as the ground beneath your feet keeps shifting. In these times, self-care becomes a clinical responsibility. It enables you to keep going, not just today, but also for the long road ahead. Whether it's taking protected time to recharge, setting boundaries on your workload, or simply talking to someone who understands, these acts of self-care are part of what sustains the healer.

Resilience is not the same as endurance, though. True resilience means knowing when to rest and when to ask for help. It means practising compassion, both for others and for yourself, in a profession that often makes space for everything except one's own well-being. Yet, physician well-being is a foundational part of a sustainable health care system. We cannot talk about improving patient care without also investing in the well-being of those who deliver it.

So, please remember that you are not alone during these times of transition and change. Our medical community is stronger when we lean on one another. Whether it's checking in with a colleague, seeking mentorship, or having an honest conversation with a peer, connection is powerful medicine. So is asking for help. If you are struggling, resources are available. The Physician Health Program, offered through Doctors of BC, provides free, confidential support

for physicians, residents, and medical students. From counseling and mental health support to help with burnout, substance use, and navigating life transitions, the Physician Health Program is there for you. You don't have to face it alone.

At the heart of any change, one thing remains steady: our shared commitment to our patients and to one another. This commitment has carried us through crisis and will carry us through transformation.

To all BC physicians, stay rooted in your purpose. Be steadfast in your values, but gentle with yourself. Prioritize self-care. Reach out. Support each other. You are not

only navigating change; you are also leading it. We have weathered storms before and have emerged stronger. And while systems change, your purpose does not. That constancy—your dedication to healing, advocating, and improving—has always been the bedrock of our health care system.

If we view change not as an enemy but as an opportunity, we can collectively steer through it with compassion and intention. By staying rooted in our shared goal of better patient care and by giving physicians the voice and support to lead, we can navigate these transitions, not just to survive them, but also to build something better on the other side. ■

—Charlene Lui, MD
Doctors of BC President

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