



Valuing community through positive connections

As I share my first remarks with you, let me begin by thanking you for the deep care and commitment you offer to British Columbians. Despite significant challenges, you continue to show up—often at the expense of your own well-being. I am deeply grateful to each of you for your dedication, compassion, and persistence in caring for others, even when it's hard to care for yourself. When we stand together and stay connected, we have the power to shape a better health care system—one that serves our patients and strengthens our ability to thrive in the profession we love.

I've always valued my colleagues and have been motivated by a sense of justice on their behalf. My first leadership experience—like many of yours—began organically. As a 25-year-old resident, I challenged a hospital board in the UK to secure fair on-call pay for my colleagues and myself. We won. That experience shaped me. My commitment to our profession is unwavering: I will always advocate for you, and when the moment calls for it, I will fight for you.

I've also learned that leadership must be pragmatic. We must seize opportunities when they arise—such as with the Longitudinal Family Physician Payment Model—and remain agile in our advocacy, adapting to ensure we achieve meaningful progress. This balance between conviction and flexibility is essential during challenging times.

We face a health care system in crisis. Physicians are walking away from a system that is failing them and their patients. Specialists are suffering from moral distress due to long wait lists and a lack of resources.

Emergency departments and intensive care units are closing. Primary care, despite an improved remuneration model, remains too under-resourced to attract all the people seeking a family physician. The development of effective team-based care, led by physicians, is one crucial way to support both patients and physicians. Fiscal austerity looms, and the climate crisis will continue to add further strain on our system, our patients, and the communities we serve.

I've had the privilege of calling the Comox Valley home for the past 15 years. When I left the UK, I vowed never to take on another leadership role in medicine. Yet here I am—because this community reminded me what connection truly means, and how valuing it through leadership sustains us. The Comox Valley grounds us in nature—mountains, lakes, and ocean—each season bringing beauty and change. The opportunity to take time away from practice, with my mountain bike or skis, helps me escape into nature to nurture my own well-being.

As we enter this new “season” in health care—one marked by uncertainty, but also transformation—we must do what we've always done: adapt, learn, and keep showing up. I've watched my community evolve—from knowing nearly everyone on the main street to knowing only a few, from a close-knit group of hospital colleagues to a scattered network across various clinic offices. And yet we strive to stay connected through our divisions and medical staff associations—organizations driven to build positive connections among physicians, and between physicians and their communities.

Striving to ensure all of us engage in these organizations will allow us to be authentic with one another.

This is my hope for all of us: to let go of unnecessary expectations and allow ourselves to show up authentically to build positive connections and community. When you meet me, you'll find the same Adam my patients, friends, colleagues, and family know—and, I hope, the same Adam you'll come to know.

As president-elect, I've had the privilege of attending many gatherings focused on physician health, and one message rings clear: we must prioritize our collective resilience and well-being. In the year ahead, my focus will be on building resilience together and harnessing that resilience to care for ourselves and drive meaningful change. I want to explore how we can deepen our positive connections with each other, with our health care partners, with our patients, and within our broader communities.

I am here to serve you—to support you in these positive connections, leading with authenticity, and creating communities where we feel safe, valued, and whole. Because through genuine positive connection, we build community. And through community, we build resilience—and the collective power to shape change. ■

—Adam Thompson, MD
Doctors of BC President