



**A Physician Human Resource
Strategy for Canada**

TASK FORCE TWO

**Une stratégie en matière d'effectifs
médicaux pour le Canada**

GROUPE DE TRAVAIL DEUX

**NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON
PHYSICIAN HUMAN RESOURCES**

**CONFÉRENCE NATIONALE SUR
LES EFFECTIFS MÉDICAUX**

January 22-24, 2006 OTTAWA

du 22 au 24 janvier 2006 OTTAWA

Moving Forward to Improve Physician Human Resources

Statement from the National Conference on Physician Human Resources

February 1, 2006 (OTTAWA) – From January 22 to 24, 2006, more than 130 delegates from some 60 government (federal, provincial, territorial) and professional organizations gathered in Ottawa for two days of discussions and priority setting concerning physician human resources in Canada. At the close of the Conference, all agreed that addressing the shortage of physicians in Canada and improving physician human resource planning will require action in three major areas.

1. Creating a New National Body or Mechanism

Delegates to the National Conference on Physician Human Resources supported the creation of a non-governmental body or mechanism that would help improve the way we undertake physician human resource planning in this country. This national body would coordinate the efforts of planners across the country, would conduct much needed research on an ongoing basis, and would provide leadership and policy direction related to health human resource planning in Canada. The national body or mechanism would share the results of its work with the national, provincial, territorial, regional, regulatory, and institutional authorities that are responsible for health human resource planning. With this new national body or mechanism in place, governments, educators, employers and professional associations will be better able to anticipate emerging issues and provide solutions when they are needed.

Delegates all agreed that such a body would build on mechanisms and organizations that are in place already and would avoid duplication. Task Force Two's steering committee will develop recommendations on the form, mandate and funding requirements for such a body or mechanism over the next two months.

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2. Making Teamwork Work

Delegates agreed that bringing together physicians and other health professionals to work in teams can be an important part of the solution to challenges such as access to care, wait times for patients, shortages and burn out for professionals. They also agreed that we need to build on initiatives already begun by federal, provincial and territorial governments and universities if we are to reap the full benefits of this team approach to health care. These issues raised by a team approach are important and need to be addressed:

- Health care professionals will need support as they adjust their education throughout their career cycle
- Professionals will need to adjust to working in teams
- The concerns about liability that arise from a team approach to health care will need to be addressed
- A culture of trust between all health professions will need to be fostered
- Planners will need to gather evidence-based research to guide them to the models of care delivery that deliver the optimal blend of health outcomes, patient satisfaction, provider satisfaction and productivity

Delegates agreed that the resources and time that will be needed to address these issues are far outweighed by the numerous and significant advantages of innovative, team approaches to health care.

3. Preparing Today for Tomorrow's Challenges

Most delegates agreed that Canada needs to improve its ability to define and monitor the health needs of Canadians, providers (physicians and other health professionals) as well as the governments who fund the system. The health care system is dynamic and the answer to the question "How many doctors does Canada need?" will change over time, with organizational models, and be driven by economic, demographic, social, professional (i.e. scopes of practice) and technological forces. Delegates called for ongoing research and analysis to monitor these forces and forecast the resulting demand for, and supply of physicians in Canada. Today's research and preparation will ensure we have the health human resources we need in the future.

In addition to the long-term directions listed above, delegates to the National Conference agreed that there are urgent physician human resource issues that need to be addressed immediately. Canada faces a shortage of physicians in certain regions of the country, such as northern Canada, rural areas and even some large urban centres. Certain fields of medicine also face shortages, such as family medicine and obstetrics. Canada's First Nations, Inuit and Métis can also bring innovative solutions and culturally appropriate approaches to resolve severe shortages. Delegates agreed that rapid and sustained action is required by all players in the health care system to address these immediate shortages.

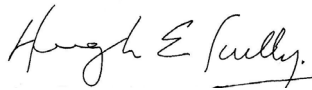
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The National Conference was the culmination of three years of consultation, research and strategic planning by Task Force Two. The Steering Committee will now integrate the results of the Conference into its findings and prepare a final report of recommendations by March of 2006.

The three-year multi-phase initiative is one of the Government of Canada's sector studies in health. Task Force Two's \$4.8 million budget is funded by the Government of Canada's Sector Council Program, Health Canada and the medical community (\$1.6 million of cash and in-kind contributions). For more information about Task Force Two and the research reports the group has published go to www.physicianhr.ca.



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