



# Physician HR Progress Report

A Physician Human Resource Strategy for Canada  
TASK FORCE TWO

November 2004

## New study explores the working life of Canada's physicians

### Clear picture of current challenges helps Task Force Two plan for the future

Researchers from the Canadian Labour and Business Centre (CLBC) and the Canadian Policy Research Networks (CPRN) are nearing completion of their study of the working life of Canada's medical doctors and factors that impact them. The research team commissioned by Task Force Two has spent nine months studying physicians' work organization and conditions, trends in training and professional development and remuneration trends and preferences for Canada's medical doctors.

As part of the comprehensive research work plan for the study, focus groups

and in-depth interviews have been completed with family physicians, specialty groups, provincial health planners and resident physicians across Canada. Interviews with Deans of medical schools and CEOs of regional health authorities have also been conducted. At the September meeting of Task Force Two's Steering Committee, the CLBC and CPRN team presented a progress report on one aspect of their study: the many challenges facing medical students and resident physicians and the impact



these challenges may have on the career choices made by Canada's future physicians.

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## Evaluating New Models of Care

### Practical evaluation tool will help planners assess how well new models of care will meet their specific needs

A research team from R. A. Malatest and Associates was recently commissioned by Task Force Two to develop a tool for evaluating different models for delivering primary care. New models of care delivery are increasingly in use across Canada as health care providers respond to financial pressures, human resources challenges and patient demand. They are innovating in the way healthcare teams are organized, managed and interact among themselves. There is also innovation in the way health

care services are funded, coordinated and integrated across different points of service or geographic settings.

The research team will focus on the more than 180 models of care that were identified, defined and later validated as part of two earlier research projects by Task Force Two (copies of the reports are available on the Task Force Two Web site at [www.physicianhr.ca](http://www.physicianhr.ca)).

The team will draw from broad consultations and their members'

own expertise in evaluating health care delivery models and experts throughout Canada to develop and test the evaluation tool. Scheduled to be completed in the Spring of 2005, the evaluation tool will make it possible for health human resource planners to carefully consider the strengths and weaknesses of different models of health care delivery as well as their implications for physician human resources.

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"The report pointed to the need for more family medicine in undergraduate teaching as well as a need to enhance and support the role of family doctors so that students see and choose this as a rewarding career," explained Dr. Hugh Scully, Communications Co-Chair of Task Force Two. "The study results revealed the importance of exposing students to family physician role models. Researchers also identified a trend towards a growing number of sub-specialties."

The CLBC/CPRN team reported that their study is on track to be submitted by January 2005, with primary research nearly completed. Once completed, this up-to-date picture of the current situation and trends in education, training and work of physicians in this country will help Task Force Two develop human resource strategies for physicians that address both those challenges we face today and those we are likely to face in the future.

As part of completing the *Occupational Data Assessment and Trend Analysis* study, the CLBC/CPRN team will be reviewing specific data from the recent National Physician Survey. Look for details about their study findings in an upcoming issue of Physician HR Progress Report.

## Validation Report Released

Task Force Two has validated an inventory of models of care that are reflective of the full range of innovative, new, emerging and existing models in Canada.

*Validating the Range and Scope of New Models for the Delivery of Medical Services* serves as an important step for the development of physician human resource strategies in Canada. The report can be read at [www.physicianhr.ca](http://www.physicianhr.ca).

### Doctors and Nurses: Task Force Two meets with Nursing Sector Study and explores potential for collaboration

The close communication between Task Force Two and a similar task force struck to develop long-term human resource strategies for nurses in Canada (Building the Future: an integrated strategy for nursing human resources in Canada) continues. A meeting in August brought together representatives from Task Force Two and the Nursing Sector Study. The meeting focused on the significant opportunities for future collaboration and information sharing with the aim of better addressing the HR challenges faced by these two vital components of Canada's healthcare system.

One tangible outcome of the meeting is a joint presentation by Task Force Two Co-Chair Dr. Hugh Scully and Nursing Sector Study Co-Chair Dr. Mary Ellen Jeans at a 2004 Health Human Resources Conference to be held in Vancouver, BC on November 25-26, 2004. The two groups will continue to explore opportunities to exchange findings, present their work and integrate their recommended human resource strategies.

## Next Step – Strategy: Task Force Two prepares for final phase of its work

At its September meeting, Task Force Two's Steering Committee began to prepare for the final phase of its mandate. Members mapped out the strategy formulation process, which will be informed by findings from the studies commissioned to date. A

working group was also established to begin work on a national conference to bring together health professionals and other stakeholders in the fall of 2005. The conference will wrap up the work of Task Force Two and allow participants to review and validate the

planning tools and HR strategies that will be the lasting legacy of Task Force Two's efforts.

Watch for an update on the fall 2005 conference in an upcoming issue of the Physician HR Progress Report.

*Physician HR Progress Report* is published by Task Force Two – A Physician Human Resource Strategy for Canada. The project is funded by the Government of Canada and the medical community. We invite all stakeholder groups to make use of the text in this newsletter as they communicate with their own members. Enquiries and feedback can be directed to Task Force Two via mail, telephone, facsimile or email:

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