



Royal College Strategic Plan 2023–2026



ROYAL COLLEGE
OF PHYSICIANS AND SURGEONS OF CANADA
COLLÈGE ROYAL
DES MÉDECINS ET CHIRURGIENS DU CANADA

Message from President and CEO

The Royal College's primary value to specialist physicians, patients and communities lies in setting, assessing against and upholding Canada's national standards for specialty medicine while supporting continuous learning and practice improvement for specialist physicians within their teams.

Together, these functions are reflected in the Royal College designation. Specialist physicians who attain and maintain their fellowship over the course of their careers can share in the pride of continually achieving one of the highest, internationally recognized specialist standards.

This strategic plan describes our vision and sets out the specific actions we will take across four core areas to support specialist physician learning, uphold rigorous standards and accreditation for specialty medicine, assess candidate physicians against established standards and foster connection across specialty medicine and all health care system partners. It is our strategy to support specialist physicians — from residency through to retirement — to meet the challenges of an evolving profession in a complex and rapidly changing world recovering from the global COVID-19 pandemic.

Extensive consultations over recent years have informed our strategy. We have come to understand that three complex societal issues are impacting the care specialist physicians deliver and need to be addressed collectively by our membership. We have integrated these as themes into each of our core areas so we can begin to address the learning challenges and programming requirements inherent in each. They are:

As an organization of members supported by a world-class staff and contributors, we recognize that to enhance the value of the Royal College for specialist physicians, patients and communities, our actions must be informed by our members, patient and other health care partners, supported by an engaged and thriving workforce and delivered through a state-of-the-art digital experience. This is a plan designed to do just that: introduce a member- and patient-informed Royal College that supports seamless learning not only for our core functions, but also for the pressing issues facing society in 2023 and beyond.



Brian Hodges, MD, FRCPC, PhD
President, Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada

- **Health human resources and workforce well-being**—Exhaustion, attrition and licensing challenges are eroding the depth and strength of Canada's health care workforce, impacting access to high-quality, person-centered and sustainable care. These realities cannot continue if we expect to restore joy in the care of patients and communities. We will contribute to system changes that alleviate the resource and well-being issues that negatively impact our members and their ability to provide care.
- **Indigenous health, anti-racism, equity, diversity and inclusion**—To realize truly equitable access to care, a deep understanding of the needs of Indigenous, Black and other systemically marginalized groups is required. These learnings and principles must be integrated into the care of patients and communities, and applied to our core areas to eliminate the racism and other inequities that some specialist physicians face throughout their careers.
- **Planetary health and sustainable health care**—Specialist physicians and health care teams can play a unique role as stewards of sustainable health care and advocates for the health of populations, including systemically marginalized groups who may be more significantly impacted by climate change.



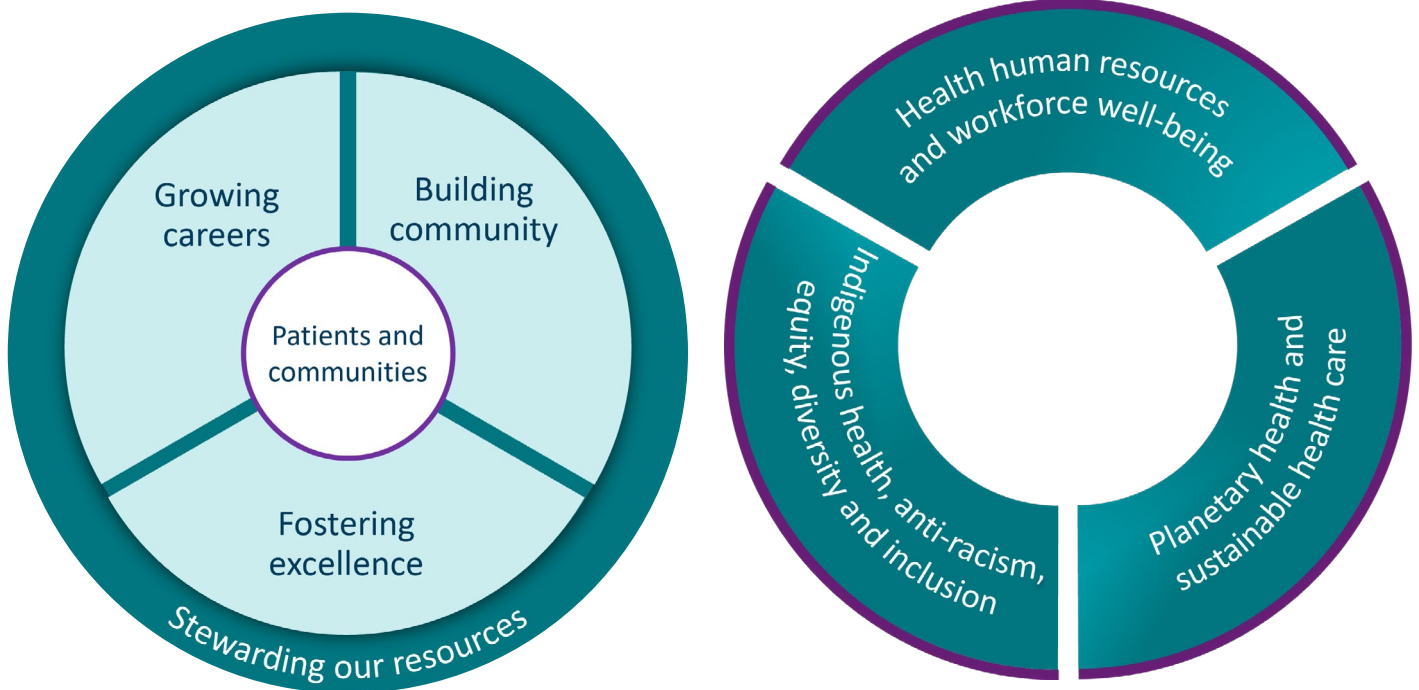
M. Ian Bowmer, MDCM, FRCPC, FRCP, FCAHS, FACP(hon), FRCPI(hon)
Chief Executive Officer (Interim), Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada

How did we get here?

This strategic plan came to be through extensive consultation with our Council, committees, patient partners, members and Royal College staff to uncover where the Royal College could play a pivotal role in supporting the evolution of medical education and health care at this critical time.

Following our preliminary discussions, in October 2022, we also invited our members to partake in a survey to deepen our understanding of their networks and communities, and validate priorities to shape our strategic plan.

We continued with a targeted follow-up in May 2023, as well as consultations with key Royal College committees, health care organizations across jurisdictions and patient partners. It was through these consultations and discussions that we received strong support of the strategic themes and the willingness to advance them.



In our 2023-2026 strategic plan, our strategic priorities (Building Community, Growing Careers and Fostering Excellence) are being integrated in the work that we do through our core activities in learning, standards and accreditation, assessment, and connecting.



Vision

Advancing learning for specialist physicians to deliver the best health care for all.



Commitment statement

We partner and collaborate to:

- Lead the evolution of specialty medical education and standards

- Support specialist physicians, learners and teams to continuously improve

- Advocate for excellence in specialty medicine by supporting innovation, well-being, equity and person-centered care



Attributes

Inclusive | Expert | Progressive



Values

Integrity | Collaboration | Respect

Our strategic plan at a glance

Advancing learning for specialist physicians to deliver the best health care for all

Support learning

Revise CanMEDS and Maintenance of Certification (MOC) to enhance the learning experience

Establish standards

Revise CanMEDS, accreditation standards and Competence by Design to meet evolving needs

Assess candidates

Align on the vision for the future of Royal College examinations and reform Practice Eligibility Routes

Foster connection

Improve the member experience and enable more impactful collaboration and advocacy

Continue to build a firm foundation

- Promote HHR and the well-being of staff and contributors
- Integrate the principles of indigeneity, anti-racism, equity, diversity and inclusion in all activities
- Broaden our international impact and advance planetary health and sustainable health care



Support specialist physician learning

We support continuous learning and practice improvement across specialist physicians' careers in ways that enable them to meet evolving patient and community health care needs. We assist specialist physicians in meeting society's expectations of continuous professional development by delivering accessible, relevant and up-to-date learning frameworks and platforms.

We will move forward on our core activities to support learning through these focused initiatives:

- Refresh learning frameworks — CanMEDS and Maintenance of Certification — to meet the needs of patients, communities and specialist physicians
- Develop an approach to offer learning assets and events across specialist physician careers and improve our learning platform to provide an enhanced member learning experience

How we will integrate our three themes across our work to support learning

To support health human resources and workforce well-being:

- Develop and curate well-being resources for staff and members
- Collaborate with others to define the extent of burnout in existing systems and develop potential improvement strategies

To advance Indigenous health, anti-racism, equity, diversity and inclusion:

- Collaborate to deploy the learning and unlearning strategies that enable staff and members to serve equity-deserving individuals and groups
- Collaborate with other organizations and amplify existing programs where appropriate to enable collective learning

To support planetary health and sustainable health care:

- Develop and curate planetary health and sustainable health care learning resources
- Collaborate with other organizations to define and support the role of specialist physicians in planetary health

Uphold rigorous standards and accreditation for specialty medicine

We design Canada's standards for specialist physician competence to ensure Royal College members continue to meet the needs of patients and communities throughout their careers. By working in collaboration with our members and other health system partners, we ensure these standards continually evolve to reflect and address current societal needs. By accrediting programs, institutions and providers, we ensure that specialist physicians learn according to these rigorous standards. We also extend our work and expertise in standards and accreditation into other countries to enhance medical education and training globally.

We will move forward on our core activities to uphold rigorous standards and accreditation through these focused initiatives:

- Finalize and operationalize the next revision of the CanMEDS Framework to meet the needs of patients, communities and specialist physicians
- Revise the CanRAC and continuing professional development general accreditation standards to meet the needs of patients, communities and specialist physicians
- Conduct ongoing program evaluation of Competence By Design to assess whether it is achieving the expected outcomes

How we will integrate our three themes across our standards and accreditation work

To support health human resources and workforce well-being:

- Include workforce well-being in standards such as the next iteration of the CanMEDS Framework
- Simplify the delivery of, and expectations related to, Royal College programs such as Competence By Design, and ensure that training models do not create an additional administrative burden
- Implement the Royal College's multi-pronged strategy to address challenges facing Internal Medicine

To advance Indigenous health, anti-racism, equity, diversity and inclusion:

- Consider the implications of anti-Black racism, anti-Indigenous racism and all other forms of racism as we develop standards such as the next version of the CanMEDS Framework and updated accreditation requirements
- Ensure that accreditation standards mandate the inclusion of Indigenous health core curriculum in every accredited residency program
- Implement Indigenous health, anti-racism, equity, diversity and inclusion objectives within standards and accreditation

To support planetary health and sustainable health care:

- Embed planetary health and sustainable health care concepts within standards such as the new CanMEDS Framework and accreditation requirements

Assess candidate physicians against established standards

We assess current and future specialist physicians based on established standards, and award certification or attestation to those who meet the standards. Specialist physicians are then required to demonstrate their continued competence throughout their careers by participating in the Maintenance of Certification Program. Our assessment and certification process is available to specialist physicians seeking certification regardless of receiving training in Canada or abroad, and conveys the highest standard of achievement.

We will move forward on our core activities to assess candidate physicians through these focused initiatives:

- Align on a vision and strategy for the future role of Royal College exams in a competency-based education era
- Launch new Practice Eligibility Routes to streamline certification pathways for international medical graduates

How we will integrate our three themes across our assessment work

To support health human resources and workforce well-being:

- Streamline certification pathways for international medical graduates to support an increasing supply of specialist physicians and enhance access to the profession

To advance Indigenous health, anti-racism, equity, diversity and inclusion:

- Carry out all certification streamlining in ways that increase the equity, fairness and transparency of the process
- Following revisions to accreditation standards, initiate planning to embed Indigenous health within examination content and processes
- Implement Indigenous health, anti-racism, equity, diversity and inclusion objectives within assessment

To support planetary health and sustainable health care:

- Consider impacts to planetary health in our decision-making about exam delivery



Foster connection across specialty medicine and health care partners

Strong connections within specialty medicine are critical to informing and delivering on our work. We engage with all members to provide learning services, including specialist physicians in practice, residents and trainees who choose to join as affiliates. We engage with members and trainees who contribute directly to the activities of the Royal College, and we build external relationships enabling collaboration and advocacy for specialty medicine.

We will move forward on our core activities to foster connection through these focused initiatives:

- Harmonize our approach to members who provide exceptional advice and guidance for Royal College activities
- Improve our engagement with specialty medicine trainees to encourage joining the Royal College as affiliates, with the goal of enhancing our relationship with members from training through to retirement
- Expand bilingual services to meet the needs of francophone members
- Redevelop, align and focus medical education awards, grants and research along the Royal College's strategic themes

How we will integrate our three themes across our work to foster connection

To support health human resources and workforce well-being:

- Advocate for the development of a national well-being plan for health care providers
- Establish a well-being coalition of health care organizations that can advance well-being for specialist physicians and teams

To advance Indigenous health, anti-racism, equity, diversity and inclusion:

- Collaborate with Indigenous leaders to develop an Indigenous health research strategy and to inform the Royal College's work to address the Indigenous Truth and Reconciliation calls to action related to medical education
- Work with our equity, diversity and inclusion partners to eliminate racism and promote equity, diversity and inclusion by identifying needs as well as opportunities for curating learning
- Enable social and professional identity member profile data through our digital platform to better understand the composition of physician specialists in Canada

To support planetary health and sustainable health care:

- Contribute to a planetary health coalition of members and partner organizations

Continue to build a firm foundation through responsible stewardship

Responsible stewardship is about more than just responsible management of resources—it is also about our corporate social responsibility to people and communities. Contributing to the best health care for all is at the heart of what we do, and we are committed to working with our staff, contributors, members and partners to ensure our organizational culture and practices contribute to addressing the societal issues impacting the care of people.



People:

- Support staff, safeguard their well-being and provide resources and guidance that enable them to thrive in their work
- Continue to promote and integrate the principles of indigeneity, anti-racism, equity, diversity and inclusion in all Royal College activities

Partners and communities of practice:

- Build collaborations with partners, communities and patients to advance the best health care for all
- Enhance our work in International Development, Aid and Collaboration by including environmental factors

Stewarding resources:

- Renew our technology infrastructure to deliver an enhanced digital experience for members and staff that integrates member services, improves learning opportunities, simplifies credit tracking and personalizes web content
- Develop a Royal College sustainability plan and work towards reducing our operational carbon footprint
- Review our corporate social responsibilities with the goal of developing a corporate social responsibility framework
- Solidify the Royal College's privacy framework to ensure it complies with the most recent legislative updates

Looking forward

Over the next three years, we will continue to rely on and be informed by our members, patient partners and others in the health care community to implement, assess and adjust this strategic plan.

We would like to thank the Royal College's dedicated members, contributors, staff and partners in the health care community for their confidence in this work and support of the Royal College's commitments. In particular, we would like to thank the Royal College's members and staff, as well as our patient partners, for providing the rich and diverse discussions and ideas that created the framework for this strategic plan.



Together, we will achieve our vision of advancing learning to deliver the best health care for all.

