



Backgrounder

NATIONAL PHYSICIAN SURVEY 2010

About the National Physician Survey

The overall goal of the National Physician Survey (NPS) is to produce a comprehensive database documenting current trends in the physician workforce in Canada in response to both societal and professional changes in education and practice. Unique in its breadth and depth as Canada's primary database on the physician workforce, the NPS is a survey of the total population of physicians in Canada: practising family physicians and other specialists, as well as medical residents, and all medical students.

About the NPS Collaborative

The College of Family Physicians of Canada (CFPC), the Canadian Medical Association (CMA) and The Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada (Royal College) have combined their resources to conduct this survey. Financial and in-kind support for NPS 2010 comes from these three major national medical organizations in addition to the Canadian Institute for Health Information.

About the Questionnaires

NPS questionnaires originally evolved from the CFPC's National Family Physician Workforce Survey, the CMA's Physician Resource Questionnaire and the Royal College's Specialist Questionnaire. Since then, each edition of the NPS has featured updated versions of questionnaires that reflect the constant change in medicine and health care in Canada.

The 2010 edition of the NPS will feature different questionnaires for each target group:

1. Family Physician / General Practitioner Questionnaire
2. Other Specialist Physician Questionnaire
3. Family Medicine Resident Questionnaire
4. Other Specialty Medicine Resident Questionnaire
5. Medical Student Questionnaire

The *Family Physician* and *Other Specialist Physician Questionnaires* collect information from those in clinical practice as well as other medical fields, e.g. teaching, administration, research. Questions focus on issues such as practice settings, areas of specialization, perspectives regarding patient access to different types of care, satisfaction levels in practice, workloads, types of communities served, how practices are changing, and the roles or impacts of computer technology on the clinical, administrative and educational aspects of practice.

The *Student and Resident Questionnaires* focus on medical education and training (past, present, and future), choices about future practice, financial concerns and factors influencing entry to medical school.

NPS Findings

Leaders in academic and research communities recognize that the NPS findings inform both present and future physician workforce planning and decision-making. The findings from previous editions of the NPS have been used by researchers for articles in leading Canadian and international journals. They have also helped medical associations advocate for changes to health care policy based on solid evidence. The same findings also generated national media coverage, helping to place important medical and health care issues on the public agenda. The NPS website at nationalphysiciansurvey.ca includes all of the information gathered from the 2004 and 2007 editions of the NPS.

NPS 2010 Distribution

Approximately 90,000 individuals in Canada will be invited to participate in the 2010 edition of the NPS. Physicians will receive their printed questionnaire or an invitation to complete the NPS questionnaire online in May and June of this year. Medical residents and students will receive their invitation to complete the questionnaire online later in the fall.

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