



TRACKING CANADIAN POSTGRADUATE TRAINEES INTO INITIAL PRACTICE

Authors: *Mr. Steve Slade, Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada, Shanna DiMillo, Carole Jacob & Danielle Fréchette*

Optimizing the health workforce involves measuring its composition. The Medical Workforce Knowledgebase uses authoritative data to highlight how the physician workforce is changing. Knowledgebase results raise questions about the optimal alignment of the medical workforce with population health care needs

CHWC 2016

PURPOSE/OBJECTIVES

The Knowledgebase creates a one-stop source for planners and decision-makers to see how the physician workforce is changing. It gives researchers ready access to the detailed data needed for further analysis. Using a series of key statistics and indicators the Knowledgebase also flags areas of significant workforce growth and decline.

FINDINGS/IMPACT/OUTCOMES

Overall physician supply is increasing according to all Knowledgebase supply indicators. Mirroring the overall trend, Family Medicine, Anatomical Pathology, Emergency Medicine, Internal Medicine, Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, and Psychiatry have grown by every measure. Psychiatry has seen a 7% increase in the number of residency positions, a 13% increase in the number of entry level trainees, and an 11% increase in the size of the active Psychiatrist workforce. In contrast, 26 of 31 medical, surgical and lab specialties show signs of workforce decrease. Of note, the total number of surgical residency positions and new trainees decreased considerably since 2010. For example, the number of Orthopedic Surgery residency positions decreased 21% since 2013 and the number of first year General Surgery trainees decreased 21% since 2010. Moreover, almost 1-in-5 surgeons were aged 65+ in 2014.

CONCLUSIONS

The Knowledgebase signals change for Canada's future medical workforce. In particular, a decreased number of surgical trainees coupled with a relatively older workforce portends fewer surgical specialists in the future. Supply factors, like retirement and IMG recruitment, could mitigate or exacerbate physician workforce supply trends.