



Backgrounder Embargoed until September 28, 2011 – 5:00am EST

Medical Student and Resident Data Backgrounder of the 2010 National Physician Survey (NPS)

The National Physician Survey (NPS) is a major ongoing research project that gathers the opinions of physicians, medical residents and medical students from across Canada. It is the largest census survey of its kind and is an important barometer of the country's present and future doctors on a wide range of health care issues.

- The College of Family Physicians of Canada (CFPC), Canadian Medical Association (CMA) and Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada (Royal College) work collaboratively to manage this important research.
- The 2010 survey expands and builds on the previous surveys conducted in 2004 and 2007. Just under 5,600 residents and medical students from across the country completed the 2010 Survey.
- On September 28, 2011, the second phase of the NPS analysis is being released. This includes the data for current medical residents and medical students currently registered in all disciplines in all Canadian medical schools. The last release of the 2010 NPS data will occur in November 2011 – it will contain specialty-specific breakdowns of physicians' data.

The ability to achieve a work-life balance, to work collaboratively with other providers, to set one's work hours, and the availability of electronic tools all contribute to a future physician's career satisfaction.

- Work-life balance remains a main determinant of a satisfying practice – 51% of medical residents and 53% of medical students identify it as the most important factor.
 - o Sufficient medical competence is cited as the most important factor by 18% of residents and 23% of medical students.
 - o Specific practice environment was reported to be the most important factor by 10% of residents and 6% of medical students.
 - o The top three most important factors for a satisfying practice remain unchanged from 2007.

- Resident preference for solo practice continues to be very low at only 3%. Significantly higher proportions of respondents prefer to practice in group practice settings (41%) or within interprofessional teams (21%).
 - o The practice preferences are compatible to those expressed in 2007 when 2% of residents reported planning to set up solo practice.
- The proportion of 2nd year residents who were exposed to electronic medical records (EMRs) during their training has increased from 68% in 2007 to 80% in 2010. In 2010, 82% of 2nd year residents intend to use EMRs in their practice compared to 75% in 2007.
 - o The residents' intentions may influence their future practice organization: currently only 39% of practicing physicians use EMRs to enter and retrieve patient notes.

The proportion of the residents who intend to leave Canada to practice medicine is decreasing.

- 5.5% of medical residents reported planning to practice in another country upon graduation. This figure has decreased since 2007 when the proportion was 9.3%.
- 3% of medical residents have been recruited to practice in the U.S. (3% in 2007).
- The proportion of residents planning to practice in the U.S. to pay off their medical education debt has also remained stable from 2007 at 4%.

Levels of debt related to the costs associated with the medical education continue to increase. Debt has several significant impacts on the intended practice of medicine for residents.

- In 2010 23% residents estimated having over \$120,000 in education-related debt by the time they complete their residency training compared to 17% in 2007, an increase of 6%.
 - o The highest proportions of residents with over \$120,000 in debt were in Memorial University (47%) and Northern Ontario School of Medicine (44%)
 - o The lowest proportions were reported in Universities of Laval (6%) and Sherbrooke (7%)
- 29% of medical residents who indicated that they were accumulating debt plan to practice in a location providing a financial recruitment incentive. This proportion was significantly higher in 2007 (41%).
- 37% of medical students indicated that they will have over \$80,000 in education-related debt by completion of medical school. This is comparable to the 2007, when 36% indicated this level of debt.
- 24% of medical students reported planning to select a specialty with a high earning potential and 17% plan to select a shorter residency program to begin paying off their debts sooner.
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The top 5 specialty selections remain largely the same, with increased popularity of Emergency Medicine, and an emphasis on specialization across all disciplines.

- The top 5 specialty selections remain the same compared to 2007. Emergency Medicine however moved up from fourth to third place, almost replacing Internal Medicine as the second most popular specialty.
 1. Family Medicine
 2. Internal Medicine
 3. Emergency Medicine
 4. Pediatrics
 5. Obs/Gyn
- Interest in sub-specialization and intent to continue in third-year programs has increased since 2007.
 - o 23% of Family Medicine residents in 2010 planned to continue with a third-year training program, compared to 19% in 2007
 - o 32% plan to sub-specialize within an area of Family Medicine
 - o 37% of other specialty medicine residents plan to sub-specialize within their current specialty with an additional 5% already training in a sub-specialty area.

The percentage of Family Medicine residents planning to practice in small towns as well as rural and remote areas is comparable to the proportion of Canadian population living in these settings.

- 4% intend to practice in remote/isolated settings
- 10% plan to practice in rural settings
- 20% intend to practice in small towns
 - An estimated 20% of Canadian population lives in these settings combined and 34% of physicians are planning to practice there.
- 38% plan to practice in inner cities/urban/suburban settings
- 13% have not made this decision yet
- 36% of Family Medicine residents and 11% of Medical Students are studying in a satellite campus.

Generally, both students and residents report feeling satisfied with their programs, with slight increases from 2007 satisfaction levels. Areas of improvement include areas such as access to specific electives and the availability of career counselling.

- 90% of medical students are satisfied with their training program (compared to 82% in 2007)
- 84% of medical residents are satisfied with their training program.
 - o In 2007 7% of 2nd-year residents were dissatisfied with their training program – this proportion has dropped to 4% in 2010.
- 81% of residents report being satisfied with both the number and quality of preceptors available to them in their training program.
- However, only 63% are satisfied with their ability to access electives of their choice. 12% report dissatisfaction with this aspect of their training program.

- Only 59% are satisfied with mentorship and counselling available to them – the proportion of dissatisfied residents is 14%.
 - o Among “other specialty” residents, only 29% reported that training on managing their career/practice was available.

For more information and to see the NPS 2010 data results, please go to www.nationalphysiciansurvey.ca

To request interviews, please contact:

Lucie Boileau
Canadian Medical Association
1-800-663-7336 ext. 1266 / (613) 731-8610 ext. 1266
Cell: 613 447-0866
Lucie.Boileau@cma.ca

Sandy Shearman
The Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada
1-800-668-3740 ext. 464 / (613) 730-8177 ext. 464
sshearman@rcpsc.ca

Jayne Johnston
The College of Family Physicians of Canada
1-800-387-6197 ext. 303/ (905) 629-0900 ext. 303
jjohnston@cfpc.ca

(Aussi disponible en français)