

Emergency Medicine: The Heart of Health

Dear Colleagues and Friends:

You are all very special people, and you have a very special role in society. Whether our communities realize it or not, we are at the very Heart of Health for our people. And Health and the alleviation of suffering is one of those things in life that people value most.

But Health Care and our social safety net in Canada is suffering. We see this because we work at the interface of almost every system of care there is. Our training and our experience every day remind us that there are better ways to do the work we do, we have seen better ways before and our moral distress for the well-being of our patients and for each other is palpable.

So why do we think emergency medicine is so special? I know I do, and I hope you do too, but there are many types of care, in many settings, through many specialties, for a society with incredible diversity.

EM is special because we are at the core of the ability of health care to survive... to stay alive.

If there is no primary care... we are there

If no long term care... we are there

If no surgical care... we are still there

If no coordination of care ... we are there

If no leadership . . . we are there

If there is no money . . . if we are at war . . . in all kinds of disasters ... and in epidemics ... we are still there.

If we are not there, there is nowhere else to go.

We need to take care of our heart.

How do we take care of our heart? We Feed and nurture, support, energize... and it will carry you far. Weaken it, and systems fail.

We need to support our patients and energize our physicians and nurses, by educating a whole new generation of us, and with it emergency care and culture. We need primary and long term care to ease the burden on hospitals and front line workers. And we need cohesiveness and coordination between all jurisdictions, to value and recognize that shared and focused investment to keep our heart healthy really benefits everyone. Because sooner or later, emergency medicine serves everyone.

We also need to be there for each other, we are a community of intensely caring people. Above all we need to bring equity to emergency medicine in Canada. It is the antidote to burnout. Joy in work comes from the good and caring interactions with our patients and families. Aligning your work every day with your values is how you can reduce frustration and hopelessness, and actually even save your career (Varshoe, Equipping for Equity, UBC)

We need to lead a transformation. Health care in Canada needs tangible hope. And hope comes from the heart.

Sincerely,

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