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Subject: Common Ground: Two Hours for Our Professional Home
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Two Hours for Our Professional Home

Dear colleagues,

When the Annual Meeting of Members (AMM) starts at 7:00 p.m. (ET) on October 28th, it will be 5:00 p.m. in Yellowknife. On most days, that's about when I'm finishing in the clinic or at the hospital, checking the inbox, and thinking about what's left for patients and at home.

I know that giving time to a governance meeting is a real demand. I'm asking because these decisions shape how our professional home works, and how it answers to you.

Only a small number of members usually take part in our AMM and vote. I hope we can broaden that participation this year, so the decisions reflect the range of experiences and perspectives within family medicine.

Members should be able to understand decisions, influence direction, and see how membership dollars are used. We should also know what happens after we vote. Those are fair expectations, and the Board has a responsibility to meet them.

What are you deciding?

In an earlier *Common Ground* I wrote about reviewing the CFPC's by-laws, the rules that govern how it operates. One package of amendments at this meeting addresses inconsistencies and brings those rules into line with the *Canada Not-for-profit Corporations Act*.

There is also a separate set of decisions about member participation, transparency, and accountability.

Three members submitted six proposals covering elections, access to Board and committee records, advance voting, bringing proposals forward, the Board's response to adopted proposals, and financial disclosure. I thank them for bringing these questions to members and contributing to the discussion about the CFPC's future.

The Board agrees with many of the underlying objectives and has presented five alternative motions for members to consider, to comply with legal and operational requirements. The approaches differ in some important ways. The meeting materials set out the proposals, alternatives, and Board recommendations, with explanations of what each would mean in practice.



"On the shores of Great Slave Lake" by Dr. Sarah Cook

The wording matters. As the meeting materials explain, the Board's alternatives can be put into practice right away. They fit with the by-laws and comply with the law the CFPC operates under, and they leave the Board able to do the job it is responsible for. The member proposals are less certain in that respect: parts of them sit uneasily with the law or with other sections of the by-laws, and, according to our analysis, miss some necessary related changes. Some would also be hard to run or be costly to sustain. If an original proposal passes without its corresponding alternative, the CFPC would make best efforts to implement its lawful provisions, but court direction may be needed before it could proceed with others. None of that is a criticism of what is trying to be achieved. It is a practical judgment about what will work while achieving the same goals.

Please take some time to consider them. Each motion is a separate decision, and the choice belongs to members. A useful place to start is the [summary table on page 19](#) of the meeting materials, followed by the explanations of the topics that matter most to you.

Our responsibility continues after the votes are counted. The Board will make every effort to implement the lawful provisions members adopt and report back to members on next steps and progress. If implementation requires clarification or court direction, we will explain that openly, including what it means for moving forward. Members deserve to know what is happening, what is taking longer, and why.

How to take part

If you can join us, please do. If you cannot, appointing a proxy is a meaningful way to participate. For many colleagues, it is the most realistic one.

- **Vote for directors and officers by October 25th at 11:59 p.m. (ET).** Use the electronic ballot instructions and your unique control number emailed on October 7th.

- **Join the virtual AMM on October 28th, from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. (ET).** Registration information and meeting materials are on [the AMM web page](#).
- **If you cannot attend, appoint a proxy by October 25th at 11:59 p.m. (ET).** Follow the emailed Lumi instructions sent on October 7th. You can direct how your proxy votes on each item.

The election ballot and proxy process are separate. Voting for directors and officers does **not** cast your votes on the meeting motions. Those require attending or appointing a proxy this year.

Members will also consider keeping membership fees unchanged for 2027 and continuing fee relief for colleagues facing financial hardship. Time is set aside at the meeting for members' questions.

I want the decisions we make to reflect the breadth of our profession: different communities, practices, career stages, and views. Your experience belongs in that conversation.

Thank you for making time to help shape our professional home. And, as always, you can write to me. I read and respond to every member email. I welcome hearing what would make participating easier and more meaningful for you.

Warmly,

Sarah Cook, MD, CCFP, FCFP, CCPE, CHE
President
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