

With residents feeling woefully short on practice management info, Resident Doctors launches campaign

Written by Donalee Moulton on March 22, 2017 for [The Medical Post](#)

Ottawa – This spring will bring with it crocus blooms, red robins and a practice management campaign from Resident Doctors of Canada (RDoC). The national awareness initiative, slated to roll out within the next two weeks, is intended to improve non-medical training for the country’s newest wave of physicians.



Dr. Melanie
Bechard

While residents generally feel well prepared to meet the demands of medical practice, the same comfort level is not there with respect to managing their practice, said Dr. Melanie Bechard, co-chair of the RDoC’s Practice Committee. “We were hearing from our members that this is an area that needed national leadership.”

Two elements of training are at issue. First, there is a lack of consistent training across the country and across specialties in areas such as finances and the law. Research conducted by RDoC in 2015 found that while 85% of family medicine residents reported receiving some form of practice medicine training during their residency fewer than 60% of medical, surgical, and diagnostic residents received such training. Overall, only 10% of respondents were satisfied with their training in non-clinical skills.

Resident Doctors of Canada is hoping its awareness campaign will reshape the current reality. The organization, which found no published studies describing practice management training in Canada, has developed a training principles document for dissemination to medical associations and medical student groups across the country. As well, there will be a social media campaign.

The document, which will also be made available online, identifies four key principles for effective practice management training. It must be universal, comprehensive, evidence-based and collaborative. What it should not be is uniform, said Dr. Bechard, a pediatric resident with the University of Toronto. “It is about the right training at the right time,” she stressed.

Family medicine residents, for example, may benefit from oversight and training on administrative duties while doing a rotation at a clinic. Surgeons may get more value from a face-to-face seminar of the medical-legal issues specialists can encounter. Ultimately, it is the patients who benefit as doctors effectively and efficiently handle their practice management duties.

The other training-related issue identified by RDoC, which has spent the past 18 months investigating practice management training, relates to delivery. Online modules are not effective for busy, overworked residents, said Dr. Bechard. “Residents like lectures with dedicated time or experiential learning.”

Calls for better practice management training are unlikely to abate. The issue has gained greater prominence over the past few decades as doctors have come to acknowledge that running a practice is not intuitive and varies from specialty to specialty. Today, practice management is a key component of CanMEDS and CanMEDS-FM and included in resident program accreditation. "It is definitely recognized as being very important to medical schools and colleges," said Dr. Bechard.

In addition, she noted, Resident Doctors of Canada intends to continue shining a spotlight on the issue. "It is at the forefront of our agenda."
