



An Invitational Symposium on the Future Directions of
the Association of Faculties of Medicine of Canada

**The Future of Health Care, Health Research
and Medical Education:
The next 75 years**

Symposium proceedings

October 22, 2018

The Westin Hotel

The Future of Health Care, Health Research and Medical Education: The next 75 years

The legacy of AFMC is built on the commitment of our faculties of medicine to serving the needs of



Canadians and to leading innovation in medical education and health research. On October 22, 2018, AFMC celebrated its 75th anniversary by hosting a symposium on the future of health care, health research and medical education. There were over 100 partners, stakeholders and thought leaders in academic medicine from across Canada and the United States. During the event we highlighted the work of AFMC over the last 75 years, and envisioned the next 75 years.

Our first speaker, Dr. Michael J. Strong, the President of the Canadian Institutes of Health Research commented on the future of health research. Dr. Strong indicated that “science must inform all aspects of our discussion”. He identified aging of the population as one key area of change in the future. “We must invest in the next generation of health care professionals, whether they are practitioners or researchers, who are going to be able to sustain the knowledge translation that is required.”



Dr. Darrell G. Kirch, the President and CEO of the Association of American Medical Colleges, responded to Dr. Strong’s presentation by supporting that the aging issue is very real and that the challenges with the health workforce are concerning. “Where are the physician-scientists that are so critical? Even if we increase funding, if we don’t have those individuals pursuing careers in science, we will suffer.” He concluded that “science hasn’t had the kind of voice it

needs in the public square”.

Participants provided their feedback on the future direction of health research and the role AFMC. The areas of focus identified for AFMC include: enhancing advocacy for health research along the four pillars at a federal level and with key funding agencies including Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, Natural Sciences and



Engineering Research Council and the Canada Foundation for Innovation; supporting clinician scientists and MD/PhD programs; collaborating with other national health professional organizations as a means to raising the profile of health research; enhancing the use of big data in health systems research.



Dr. Philip Edgcumbe, a Faculty Member of Singularity University Canada and Principal of Med Edge Consulting spoke to his view of the future of health care. “Health Care is becoming much more proactive and virtual. Personalized and precise instead of one size fits all. And this is going to happen because our ability to monitor a person’s health status is simply exploding exponentially”. He predicted that this will fundamentally transform the role of the physician.



Professor and Director in the School of Public Policy at the University of Calgary, Dr. PG Forest, provided an additional perspective. He focused on the need for strong primary health care, extending the range of services, creating and ensuring effective care teams, defining established pathways for care, shared decision making to solve the tension between the needs and wants of the population, data driven decisions and outcome driven investments.

The discussion at the tables reaffirmed that AFMC must continue its role as a key partner and contributor in shaping the health care system. The role of the physician will change with the advances in technology, and artificial intelligence and the shifts in health care delivery. AFMC and our medical schools must ensure that future members of the profession have the attributes to meet the changing needs of Canadians. Future physicians should also be engaged in the development of the ethical and privacy frameworks that will be required in this evolving health care environment.





The Dean of Dell Medical School, University of Texas at Austin, Dr. Clay Johnston, spoke on the future of medical education. Dr. Johnston argued that a new model of medical education is required as a result of the rapid changes noted by the previous speakers. “Our physicians are going to be in practice 30 years from now. We need to be thinking about how we take what we anticipate for the future and bring that into our curriculum”. He also indicated that the art of medicine, communication, trust, and connection, is

not going to become less important but more important over time.

Ms. Stephanie Smith, the President of the Canadian Federation of Medical Students responded to Dr. Johnston by supporting that the physicians of tomorrow need to be capable of meeting future patient and population needs. “We need to learn how to help our patients navigate through the changing world of virtual access to care”. We also need to learn how to do research effectively while in medical school if we are expected to do it within practice.



Participant feedback confirmed that AFMC must lead the shaping of the health workforce of the future. Medical education needs to become more inter-professional, learner and patient centric as well as agile to adapt to modern teaching methods fully supported by technology. Learners must be engaged in leading the rapidly changing health care system they will inherit. AFMC must also help schools development more supportive and positive learning environments.



In summary, the common theme brought up by the speakers, respondents and participants was that we are entering a time of transformative change in health care. From future health care service delivery models, to the transformations in medical education or the breaking down of barriers to research innovation, all agreed that AFMC has a critical role to play in influencing this change as the voice of academic medicine in Canada.