

May 19 is BC Family Doctors Day

BC's Family Doctors work tirelessly for their patients – now is the time to say thank you

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Surrey, BC

For immediate release

There are over 300 family physicians in Surrey and North Delta, and on May 19, we have a chance to thank them for the services they tirelessly provide to patients in our community. “Family Physicians are the backbone of our primary care system,” says Tomas Reyes, Executive Director of the Surrey-North Delta Division of Family Practice. “Most of the time, they are silent heroes, dealing with a lot of pressure and system challenges as they ensure their patients receive the care that they deserve.”

Dr. Lawrence Yang is one of those physicians who are tirelessly serving our community. As most of his peers have, Dr. Yang established his practice in Surrey-North Delta many years ago, making a commitment to provide care for as many patients as he could. In addition to his family practice, he lends his expertise working at Surrey Memorial Hospital and volunteers his time to support enhancements to our primary care system. Dr. Yang is currently heavily involved in developing Surrey-North Delta's Primary Care Network, which aims to improve access to primary care by building seamless connections to other parts of the healthcare system. This included strengthening the network of family doctors and their relationships with patients, community partners and other care providers.

According to Dr. Yang, being a family physician means being a leader in the community. “Family physicians are teachers, confidantes, healers and friends,” says Dr. Yang. “They are an integral part of community support.”

In Surrey and North Delta, family physicians spearhead several important health initiatives, including:

- Founding and running Roots Community Health Centre, which provides comprehensive healthcare for refugees and other vulnerable newcomers
- Providing much-needed maternity care at the Surrey Pre-natal Clinic
- Providing urgent care services at both of Surrey's Urgent Primary Care Centres
- Stepping up to fill emergency primary care and public health needs. For example, during the COVID pandemic, family doctors provided vaccinations, supported the regular childhood immunization schedule, and worked in testing centres.
- Leading and serving in multiple service and quality improvement projects in partnership with specialists, health authority staff and community partners. These projects aim to address some of the current systemic challenges related to communication, patient referrals and collaboration across the healthcare and social services systems

In addition to the visible work they do, family doctors in Surrey and North Delta do a great deal of emotional and behind-the-scenes labour. Says Dr. Yang, “There are hundreds of excellent family doctors

who are holding sacred space for patients to offload their worries and to be a partner in their healing journeys. That's often not recognized. There's an exceptional burden of mental health and substance use challenges in our community and family physicians do the bulk of that caring work, often without adequate supports. We're putting so many hours in, trying to create improved healthcare experiences for our patients. It's a lot of work behind closed doors.'"

What can patients do to support family doctors in our community? One way is to connect regularly with your family physician and to proactively partner with them in taking care of your own healthcare. Communication between a patient and their family doctor is extremely important, so keep your doctor informed. And make sure your other care providers keep your family doctor informed as well. This will allow them to ensure continuity of care and provide appropriate follow-ups when you need them. Patients can also ask their doctors about opportunities to strengthen the patient-physician relationship. Finally, whenever you have a chance, thank your family physician. "Being appreciated for our efforts means so much," says Dr. Yang. "The greatest reward for the work that we do is to feel that we've helped someone or made a difference."

So today, as we celebrate BC Family Doctors' Day, reach out to your Family Doctor to say thank you. Or create a reel, story or post on social media and tag the Surrey-North Delta Division of Family Practice @snddivision to be reposted. Our family doctors deserve to be recognized.

About the Surrey-North Delta Division of Family Practice

Established in 2010, the Surrey-North Delta Division of Family Practice is comprised of nearly 400 physicians at various career stages, 40 resident doctors and 200 Medical Office Assistants from across Surrey and North Delta. The Surrey-North Delta Division of Family Practice brings together family doctors to enhance the delivery of health care services in the community. It is a member-driven non-profit society, created by and for doctors, who understand the needs and realities of serving a community as large and diverse as Surrey and North Delta. The Division is funded by the Government of BC and Doctors of BC. More information about the SNDFP can be found here: <https://www.divisionsbc.ca/surrey-north-delta>

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