



# OUT BEHIND THE BARN DANS LE FEU DE L'ACTION

## Create a practice website on [www.mydoctor.ca](http://www.mydoctor.ca)

*Barrie McCombs, MD,  
FCFP  
Medical Information Service  
Coordinator, Alberta Rural  
Physician Action Plan,  
Calgary, Alta.*

*Correspondence to:  
Dr. Barrie McCombs,  
5111 Utab Dr. NW,  
Calgary AB T2N 5Z9;  
[bmccombs@ucalgary.ca](mailto:bmccombs@ucalgary.ca);  
[www.ruralnet.ab.ca/medinfo](http://www.ruralnet.ab.ca/medinfo)*

**W**hether you are a family physician or a specialist, your office staff often have to answer the same routine questions over and over again, such as “Where is your office located?” or “Is the flu vaccine available yet?” You can reduce that workload by creating an Internet website that answers such questions about your practice. You can also use the website to provide patient education materials, links to approved websites, instructions for visit preparation and a description of your office policies.

### **WWW.MYDOCTOR.CA**

The Canadian Medical Association’s (CMA’s) free “mydoctor.ca” website-hosting service allows members to create a basic practice website in as little as half an hour, using only basic computer skills. It does this by asking you to fill in a series of 9 forms with information about your practice. It then uses that information to build the website for you. You can review and update your information at any time.

### **WWW.PRACTICESOLUTIONS.CA**

To obtain more information about the program, visit the “eHealth” section of the CMA’s “Practice solutions” website. The “Practice website” page provides links to articles about using and optimizing your website. The obscure “Brief overview” link in the middle of the page is a useful slide show tour of a typical website and gives practical information about creating and maintaining your own site.

### **SAMPLE WEBSITES**

If you are thinking of creating your own website, visit several of the demonstration websites listed on the “Practice website” page. Find one that matches your own practice and print off each of the pages. These will be a guide to the information that will be requested when you create your own site. Review these pages with your staff to determine which information is relevant to your particular practice.

### **BUILD YOUR WEBSITE**

When you are ready to create your website, return to the “Practice website” page, then select the “Build your website” link. You will be prompted to enter your CMA user name and password. If you have forgotten your password or have not yet registered to use the cma.ca website, options are provided. This page also contains a link to the slide show mentioned earlier.

### **WEBSITE LAYOUT**

The first task is to pick one of the available colour schemes and layout options for your site. These and other options can be changed at any time. You can also select a Web address for the site. If desired, you can create a French language version.

### **YOUR HOME PAGE**

When creating your home page, you can use the sample welcome message or create your own using the built-in text editor. If you use the editor, check carefully

for typographical errors, as there is no spell-checking function. You can add “Special alerts” that patients see as soon as they visit the site. Options are available to include your address, directions, a map and your office hours.

### **PRACTICE INFORMATION**

The “About me” section describes you personally. Options are available to list your personal office hours, special interests, the languages you speak and whether you accept new patients. Other sections list information about what patients should do to prepare for a visit and what patient services you offer.

### **PATIENT HEALTH INFORMATION**

The system provides an extensive list of patient-oriented health and community resource links. You can select the ones that are relevant to your practice or add your own. I recommend previewing links first, as the address may have changed since it was added to the list of options.

### **HEALTH PORTAL**

A new feature of the mydoctor.ca system is the ability to add features to manage patients with chronic diseases. There is an annual fee for this extra service, but a 30-day free trial is available.

### **PROMOTION**

Once you create the website, you will need to encourage your patients to use it. Create a handout that gives the website address and describes what information is available. Have your staff mention the website whenever they get a phone call requesting information that is available on the site.

### **MAINTENANCE**

It is important to keep your website up to date. Set up a system for regularly reviewing all content. Also test all external links to ensure that they are still active. To maintain and improve your website, log into the cma.ca website, click on “My profile” in the upper menu, then select the “My practice website” link. This page provides an option to allow your clinic manager to maintain your website for you.

### **SAMPLE WEBSITE**

[www.mydoctor.ca/drbarriemccombs](http://www.mydoctor.ca/drbarriemccombs)

While writing this article, I created a basic website using the features described above. Feel free to pay it a visit.

**Competing interests:** None declared.

## **RURALMED: THE SRPC LISTSERV**

## **MEDRURALE : LA LISTE DE DIFFUSION DE LA SMRC**

### **RURALMED**

Subscription to RuralMed is by request. Send an email message to: [admin@srpc.ca](mailto:admin@srpc.ca).

Include your full name and email address. If you include a short biography it will be posted to the list as your introduction. You can also access both the RuralMed archives and a RuralMed subscription form through the SRPC home page at: [www.srpc.ca](http://www.srpc.ca).

### **MEDRURALE**

Pour vous abonner au serveur de liste francophone, MedRurale, veuillez envoyer un courriel à l'adresse suivante : [lamarche@comnet.ca](mailto:lamarche@comnet.ca).

Donner votre nom au complet et votre adresse de courriel. Si vous ajoutez aussi une courte biographie, elle pourra être affichée sur la liste en guise de présentation. Vous pouvez aussi accéder aux archives de MedRurale et à un formulaire d'inscription au serveur de liste anglophone sur la page d'accueil du site de la SCMR, [www.srpc.ca](http://www.srpc.ca).