

Working Group on the Assessment of Competence for Rural and Remote Family Medicine

Background

In response to concerns raised suggesting that family medicine graduates may not be prepared to practice in rural communities, the College of Family Physicians of Canada established a working group to:

Define competencies for the purposes of enhancing training of family medicine residents and improving assessment of readiness to practice comprehensive family medicine in rural and remote communities in Canada.

Members

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Current Status

The Working Group began its work in early 2016. Its first task was to consider what competencies are most important for the practice of rural and remote family medicine. This task was not aimed at generating an exhaustive list of rural competencies, rather a core list of competencies that must be achieved at the end of residency training.

The process used a well-established modified consensus approach combining surveys and nominal group discussions with practicing rural family physicians in an iterative fashion. It is anticipated that the outcome of this process will be to add specific competencies (expressed as Priority Topics¹ and Key Features²) for inclusion in the CFPC's current processes that define certification of competence. Examples of said competencies include the ability to coordinate and manage an effective patient transfer, to provide culturally safe and sensitive care, and to conduct procedural sedation.

Path Forward

The Working Group is expected to complete its work by Fall of 2017. Once the competencies are defined, we will engage stakeholders in discussions about how to best improve residency training using the Priority Topics and Key Features. The major steps will include: 1) Examine how our current training programs address the outlined competencies and determine necessary improvements, and 2) Examine how our Certification and Accreditation standards influence residency training for Rural and Remote Canada and determine necessary improvements.

The vision is that the articulated competencies will guide training sites and programs to adjust their curricula and assessment strategies to ensure that our graduates are ready to practice in Rural and Remote Canadian communities.

¹ Priority Topics are the main problems/situations a competent practitioner should be able to resolve in a clinical domain or area.

² Key Features are the critical steps in resolving a clinical situation or Priority Topic. They are typically observable behaviours and direct assessment activities