



Canadian Doctors for Medicare 2020 Nominees for Board of Directors

Listed here are the nominees for board of directors for 2020. Members in good standing have been sent a link to cast their electronic ballots. **Votes can be cast until 8:10pm ET on Tuesday November 17, 2020.**

Practicing and retired physicians can vote for director(s) in their region and for member at large. Students can vote for the student board position and member at large. Residents can vote for the resident position and member at large. You may only vote once.

If you have any questions about the voting process, please contact Katie Arnup at Katie@canadiandoctorsformedicare.ca

West

Number of positions: 1

Number of Candidates: 1

Name: Dr. Ashley Heaslip

Candidate statement: Ashley Heaslip is a family doctor in Victoria, BC. Her practice is focused around inner-city medicine, addiction medicine and end of life/palliative care. She teaches as clinical faculty within the UBC Undergraduate Medicine and Family Practice Residency program, as well as within the Addiction Medicine Fellowship Program. She has a background in public health (through a Masters of Public Health at the University of Toronto) and a passion for deepening our understanding of the principles of equity and dignity in health care. She is a clinician and researcher, working on doctoral studies through the University of British Columbia in the Interdisciplinary Graduate Studies Program. In addition to her academic training and clinical roles, she also works closely with the Vancouver Island Health Authority as a physician leader. She hopes to be able to contribute her voice to the ongoing work of Canadian Doctors for Medicare to promote and strengthen publicly-funded health care. She is a proud mom to a tenacious toddler, an avid cyclist, and a regular on online zoom yoga classes.

Central

Number of positions: 1

Number of Candidates: 3

Name: Dr. Shazma Mithani

Candidate statement: Thank you for accepting this candidate statement for my nomination to CDM's Board of Directors.

I have seen firsthand the necessity of preserving our publicly funded healthcare system. From growing up as the child of immigrant parents who worked minimum wage jobs, to my career as an emergency physician serving Alberta's most vulnerable patients, and everything in between, this is something that I have felt passionately about for as long as I can remember.

This last year in Alberta is the first time that I've felt truly concerned about the ongoing existence of a publicly funded healthcare system, not only in Alberta, but in Canada. If Alberta sets the tone with a two-tiered healthcare system, and cherry picks data to show its "success," it is only a matter of time before other provinces follow suit.

This deterioration of our healthcare system is one that I have been vehemently fighting against for years, through multiple avenues, and most recently with involvement in local media and grassroots organizations such as ABdocs4patients and Eyes Forward.

With my background and experience, I can offer a unique and collaborative view to the Board to continue to fight for investment and improvement of public healthcare in Canada.

Name: Dr. Christine Froelich

Candidate statement: I am applying for the Central Board position for Canadian Doctors for Medicare because I highly value quality public health care for all Canadians. I am very concerned that this is at risk and that Alberta, in particular, is very vulnerable at this time in history.

I was born and raised in Alberta. I attended the University of Alberta medical school and then did my residency there as well, all during the Klein years. As such, I experienced and witnessed much of the chaos and destruction that attempted privatization of health care can bring. Recovery after that took many, many years and caused much needless suffering.

As a practicing Psychiatrist for over 20 years, I have seen how important universal public health care is for all Canadians, particularly those citizens who are most vulnerable. I place a high value on equitable and accessible health care for all.

I am committed to learn more about Canadian Doctors for Medicare and how I can effectively advocate within this organization. Striving for ongoing quality public health care for all Canadian is a deep passion of mine. I pledge to keep myself well informed of the Canadian Doctors for Medicare activities and to work diligently on all my responsibilities within the organization.

Thank you for considering my application for the Central Board position.

Name: Dr. Kimberly Williams

Candidate Statement: My name is Kimberly Williams and I am a Neuropsychiatry Fellow in my last months of training at the University of Calgary and a part-time staff Psychiatrist in Alberta. I completed a BSc in pharmacology and an MSc in Global Health prior to starting medical school.

For the past 15 years I have been involved in global health. This involvement has always focused on advocating for equitable health for all. Through activism, research and education programs in this area I have used my experience as an epidemiologist to help inform equitable health policy. I would like to bring this experience to a board position with Canadian Doctors for Medicare. If elected to the board of Canadian Doctors for Medicare I would also bring national board experience. I am a former President of Resident Doctors of Canada, serving on their board for three years. I have also sat on various other boards including the Canadian Medical Association, the Alberta Medical Association and the Canadian Federation of Medical Students.

Given the current pandemic, climate disasters, the political climate in Alberta, and being a new mom (I have a two-week old) - I hope to have the opportunity to work with an organization with a strong track record of advocating for policy that improves the health of **all Canadians**. I am a strong communicator and advocate, with an epidemiology background and experience on various national boards, who hopes to advocate for equitable health care as a part of the Canadian Doctors for Medicare Board.

Ontario

Number of positions: 2

1 year term

Number of Candidates: 1

Name: Dr. Danyaal Raza

Candidate Statement: Since 2017, I have had the privilege to serve as Board Chair. I am seeking a 1 year Ontario board position to serve out 4 years in this role.

My tenure as an Ontario Director and Board Chair has been eventful. Internally, I have lead or colead organizational changes including hiring our Executive Director, re-configuring our staffing model, office relocation and fundraising. Externally, I have

dedicated substantial effort to the pursuit of Pharmacare and in defense of Medicare from legal attack.

Over the past four years, CDM has defended Medicare inside and outside the BC Supreme Court. BC Board Members, staff and I worked closely in efforts that culminated in a media presence that countered Dr. Brian Day and his allies' talking points and helped to deliver a resounding legal and public victory over the Cambie Clinic.

The campaign to expand Medicare has featured Pharmacare. Of late, it has spanned a federal election, a national advisory council and House of Commons Health Committee report. My work on this issue and in these forums has helped to ensure CDM continues to be a respected and trusted voice on drug policy.

Still, there is much work to do. The Cambie Corporation is appealing the BC Supreme Court decision and though we are closer than we have ever been to universal public drug plan, we are not there yet.

Should I be re-elected, I am optimistic CDM will be better positioned to advance our work here, and in other areas. With gratitude,
Danyaal Raza

3 year term

Number of Candidates: 1

Name: Dr. Hasan Sheikh

Candidate Statement: COVID-19 has further exposed the deep-rooted health inequities in our society. With [a record high unemployment rate of 13.7% in May](#), many lost their employment benefits and joined the millions of Canadians who were already [rationing their medications and skipping their preventative dental care](#).

When we fail to provide the upstream care people need, the result is predictable: worse and inequitable health outcomes that strain our public healthcare system and threaten its sustainability. Unfortunately, even more predictable is the subsequent calls for privatization. The Cambie trial and the United Conservative Party's recent embrace of expanding privately funded healthcare are just two of the latest examples of this misguided response.

We are at a crossroads in our pandemic recovery: we can let the gaps in our society grow wider, or we can see the pandemic as an inescapable wake-up call that we need to strengthen our social safety net and address the entrenched inequities.

I have long advocated for the latter. I have advocated for [public dental care](#) and [pharmacare](#) as missing and essential pieces of Medicare, and [warned](#)

[that expanding private healthcare would just rearrange the line, not shorten it.](#) I hope to continue working towards a healthier Medicare as a member of the Board of CDM. Medicare is not only a foundation of our social safety net, it is source of pride and social cohesion. Strengthening Medicare as we endure this pandemic isn't just necessary – it's a crucial signal that we are all in this together.

Atlantic

Number of positions: 2

1 year term

Number of Candidates: 0

3 year term

Number of Candidates: 1

Name: Dr. Sarah Fraser

Candidate statement: Dear Members of Canadian Doctors for Medicare,

Thank you for considering me for this position. I am excited to help protect and strengthen Canada's medicare system with Canadian Doctors for Medicare through advocacy work. And there is still much work to be done.

Pharmacare remains the unfinished business of Medicare. As a family physician practicing addiction medicine, I have witnessed the absurdity first-hand. While one of my patients was undergoing opioid replacement therapy, he was offered a job. He later learned that taking this job would mean that his Hepatitis C treatment would not be covered. Despite his eagerness to work, he declined the job in order to get treatment coverage. Advocating for pharmacare is an area I am particularly interested in.

Effective public communication is a strength of mine. I maintain an active [blog](#) and have a background in journalism. In addition, a colleague and I recently helped launch a new section in the journal Canadian Family Physician, [The 3rd Rail](#). This has fostered important dialogue on women's reproductive rights, systemic racism and healthcare for people in the criminal justice system.

The recent U.S. election has highlighted the polarization in society, and Canada is often affected by U.S. policies. For instance, numerous Canadian organizations are promoting the privatization of healthcare. Despite the recent success of the Cambie litigation, threats to public health care have become evident in Alberta. Canadian Doctors for Medicare provides the crucial counter-narrative that can impact Canada's future. I would be honoured to be a part of it.

Territories

Number of positions: 1

Number of Candidates: 2

Name: Dr. Lindsey Campbell

Candidate statement: I am a family physician currently working in a rural community in the Yukon where I have previously locumed annually for the past six years. Due to the recent changes to the public healthcare system in moving towards privatization in Alberta, my physician husband and I decided to permanently relocate to the Yukon to be able to continue providing care in a publicly funded system. I have been a strong advocate against these changes prior to our relocation including speaking at a rally of 4000 concerned citizens at the Alberta Legislature, meeting with my MLA and several media interviews regarding the decision to leave my home province.

My prior advocacy experience includes Chief Resident of the University of Alberta (U of A) Family medicine program in 2013-2014, U of A Medical School Class Representative from 2008-2012, representing U of A at CFPC Section of Residents and attending a few Alberta Medical Association meetings as an observer, where I was sponsored to speak on issues of Canadian Students studying abroad and International graduates. I have sat on many committees during my time in medical school and residency including Residency Planning Committee Member, Quality & Safety Curriculum Committee Member, Annual Retreat (FREzER) Planning Committee Member and Wilderness Retreat Planning Committee.

I would be honoured to represent the Territories to continue advocating for a universal publicly-funded health care for all Canadians including pharmacare.

Name: Dr. Meaghan McLaren

Candidate statement: Thank you for considering my self-nomination for CDM Board of directors Territories 3 year term position.

I have been living in Yellowknife, NWT since 2017, and am currently practicing family medicine and working with the Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority as the clinical lead in public health.

Prior, I worked in academic family medicine as an assistant professor at uOttawa, providing teaching, research and clinical care to marginalized populations experiencing homelessness and HIV.

Studying for my MPH in the US and working in various provinces/territories has afforded me the opportunity to witness lived patient experiences in differing health systems and their impact on health equity.

I have seen patients living with HIV without drug coverage forced to give up their careers and livelihood to go on income assistance to be able to benefit from the drug benefits they receive in these programs. While access to essential medications prevented death from HIV, these patients suffered other negative health outcomes from the loss of income, livelihood and satisfaction that comes with a career and the ability to contribute to the workforce.

Alternatively, living in a territory that has chosen to fund physiotherapy and nicotine replacement therapy for all residents without coverage, I've seen the benefits associated with the guarantee of these services.

If elected to the CDM Board, I will work on the memberships behalf with the CDM team to maintain and protect the publicly funded health care that Canadians do have, to advocate for national public pharmacare, and to promote coverage of other essential health services such physiotherapy and dental care, through a northern, rural and remote perspective.

Member at Large

Number of positions: 1

Number of Candidates: 1

Name: Dr. Melanie Bechard

Candidate statement:

About Me:

Newly graduated Pediatric Emergency Medicine physician working in Ottawa while completing a Masters' in Public Health through Johns Hopkins University with a concentration on Health Systems and Policy.

Experience Highlights:

- CDM Board 2015-Present (Vice Chair 2019-Present)
- Federation of Medical Women of Canada Co-Treasurer 2020-Present
- Canadian Medical Association Board 2017-2018, 2019-2020
- Resident Doctors of Canada Board 2016-2019 (President 2017-2018)
- Professional Association of Residents of Ontario Board 2016-2017
- Canadian Federation of Medical Students Board 2013-2015

Vision for CDM:

- Membership Engagement: Our membership includes many health systems experts – we can use this resource! Continued webinar series and new mentorship program can mobilize their expertise. A virtual Advocacy Week that provides background and training on a CDM topic of interest, and then connects members with their local Members of Parliament, can make use of our national network. We can form a new member committee to continue to grow our “E-Rounds” evidence repository on health care financing and delivery.

- Sustainability: Engagement increases value for membership. We need more members for financial stability. Continuing our charity status application can be helpful.
- Governance Review: Plan to use my board experience to review CDM's structure and ensure we have the appropriate by-laws and committees to address current governance gaps (i.e. Executive position terms are not congruent with board terms) and provide more opportunities for members to be meaningfully involved.

Thank-you for your consideration! If elected, I hope to run for the CDM Chair position in the future. Questions or ideas? Contact: E-mail mbechar2@jhu.edu Twitter - [@bechardmel](https://twitter.com/bechardmel)

Resident Representative

Number of positions: 1

Number of candidates: 3

Name: Dr. Yipeng Ge

Candidate statement: Yipeng Ge is a public health and preventive medicine resident physician in Ottawa with an interest in health and healthcare systems level issues stemming from a desire to tackle health equity and social justice issues rooted in the determinants of health. It would be a great privilege to contribute to Canadian Doctors for Medicare as it aims to uphold and strengthen Canada's publicly-funded health care system so that health and social inequities can be mitigated through advocacy, education, and collaboration. Yipeng has had training in health systems and global health in the context of Indigenous health in Six Nations and Hamilton communities, experience in health advocacy at provincial and federal levels on health human resource planning among many other issues, and most recently contributed to global health diplomacy during the COVID19 pandemic as the Canadian youth delegate to WHO and PAHO. Yipeng has developed a unique skillset, values, and perspectives to contribute through his various leadership experiences. The Canadian health care system provides comprehensive quality services and care for many, however, it is fraught with gaps and inequities including challenges ahead that may disrupt a system that seeks to provide care for all and not conditional on one's ability to pay. Yipeng hopes to contribute to ensuring all Canadians, regardless of their intersectional identities, are able to attain their highest degree of health and wellbeing through a health care system that we can all be proud of and can rely on when we need it the most.

Name: Dr. Bernard Ho

Candidate statement: As a Family Medicine resident in Toronto and now an ER resident in Vancouver, I have seen firsthand the longstanding and downstream effects the social

determinants of health have on my patients. This has motivated me to fiercely advocate for them on an individual- and systems-level to improve Medicare for all, one of CDM's key priorities that I strive to uphold. In medical school, I joined grassroots organizations like Canadian Doctors for Refugee Care and the Decent Work and Health Network. With the former, I organized the inaugural protest in Mississauga alongside 19 other cities across the country on the National Day of Action to rally against the unconstitutional cuts to refugee healthcare. Through DWHN, I drafted a policy paper comparing Canada's minimum wage policies to other developed countries and lobbied the provincial government to improve working conditions and income inequality. I have also worked with the CFMS to organize their Lobby Day on asks including a national pharmacare strategy. As a resident, I am currently on the executive council of RDoC, where I advocate for a national licensure strategy to improve physician mobility and medical access to rural and remote communities. In this role, I have liaised with provincial and federal health ministers, as well as national stakeholders, including the CMA and FMRAC.

I will bring to CDM my experience with health policy, my advocacy skillset, and my strong belief in national pharmacare. I am also fluent in French, which I believe would be an asset to the position. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely, Bernard Ho

Name: Dr. Olivia Friesen

Candidate statement: Hi, I'm Olivia Friesen. I'm an internal medicine resident in Saskatoon, and I'm interested in the resident board position for Canadian Doctors for Medicare. I've watched the activities of Canadian Doctors for Medicare closely ever since starting medical school, and I have been greatly inspired by your work. I got involved in political advocacy at a local level, organizing meetings with provincial MLAs to discuss health issues that affected my patients including universal coverage for HIV medications, and access to mental health services. While ultimately, these discussions were fruitful and led to policy change that improved patient care, it's been distressing to me as someone from Tommy Douglas's home to watch our universal healthcare face threats from political forces, corporations, and individuals alike over the past few years. Now with the pandemic in full swing, we have a huge opportunity to bolster our public healthcare systems, and I hope to be able to contribute on a national level, should I be chosen as a board member. Specifically, I'm deeply passionate about projects related to harm reduction and pharmacare. I would also love to work on resident member recruitment, as I believe engaging more new doctors in advocacy is the best way to keep our universal healthcare system strong, and to continue to improve it.

Thank-you for this opportunity! I look forward to discovering more about what the future holds for Canadian Doctors for Medicare at the AGM!

Student Representatives

Number of positions: 1

Number of candidates: 3

Name: Andrew Lee

Candidate statement: My name is Andrew Lee and I am a third-year medical student at Queen's University. Growing up, I was an ambassador and translator for my parents to the health care system. As I stumbled through questions the physicians had for my parents, the gravity of the situation was propped up by my fragile grasp of Cantonese. I learned early that the system was difficult for my parents to navigate. I had to work beyond my scope and grew up earlier than my peers.

As a medical student I've been involved in several roles that lend well to this role such as the global health advocate representative to the CFMS, which offered me opportunities to attend the National Day of Action and the International Federation of Medical Students Meeting in Kigali, Rwanda. Additionally, I am interested in bioethics and medical humanities – and how they should be incorporated into policy making from the beginning. Most recently, I completed my term as a community member on the Anti-Racism Advisory Panel for the Toronto Police Services, where we consulted on race-based data collection practices and established indicators based on recommendations from the Andrew Loku inquest. I hope to bring my experiences from the history of medicine, bioethics and advocacy to the Board of Canadian Doctors for Medicare as a student representative. My vision of a just society, promotes and maintains good health for everyone as a means for self-actualization. Therefore, health care is fundamentally an act of resistance and a path to justice.

Name: Andriy Katyukha

Candidate statement: Dear Members of Canadian Doctors for Medicare,

Reflecting on my family's challenges with funding my father's expensive medical treatment, and our difficulty securing homecare for my grandmother, makes my passion for creating a just and comprehensive public health system very personal.

The realization that financial constraints serve as impediments to the reform needed to bolster our system motivates me to work to optimize existing health resources. My academic work has focused on improving healthcare delivery and resource management through quality improvement and health economics. Additionally, to broaden my perspective, I have worked on health policy projects that focus on supporting the development of Ontario Health Teams, a provincial integrated-care delivery model.

I have learned that to be an effective advocate/leader as a physician, I need to pursue experiences that encourage multi-disciplinary skill building. As chair of the board of Western University's Student Union and as a board member of the Volunteer Partners Board of Trillium Health Partners, I worked to improve revenue generation, strengthened knowledge management processes, and enhanced oversight capabilities

and risk management structures. I believe these experiences will enable me to add value to the board of CDM.

I am currently serving on the board of Telephone Aid Line Kingston, where I engage with community activists to improve community mental health supports. Most recently, my experiences in strategic planning led me to spearhead the development of a new strategic plan for the organization.

I deeply value the work of CDM, and it would be a privilege to serve on the board of this incredible organization.

Sincerely,

Andriy Katyukha, Queen's University | MD Class of 2022

Name: Hisham Shokr

Candidate statement: Over the years, I have developed a growing passion for understanding the connections between politics and health, and advocating for policy changes that promote health equity. I am seeking this nomination because I firmly believe that health equity depends on protecting and expanding publicly-funded health care, something which the vast majority of Canadians support. I cultivated my passion through research, employment opportunities, and grassroots activism. Pursuing a Master's of Arts in Geography, I conducted extended research abroad focusing on the manifestations of health inequity in a two-tiered health care system. Subsequently, prior to beginning medical school I worked as the Research and Campaigns Director at the Ontario Health Coalition, another group focused on protecting and improving publicly-funded health care. I also continue to be a core member of OHIP For All – a group of concerned health care providers calling for the basic provision of OHIP for all Ontarians regardless of immigration status. These are among the experiences that have shaped my understanding of health care issues. These experiences have also helped me develop the organizing, and communication skills necessary to push for systemic change. As a physician in training, I hope to continue to be an advocate for equitable health policies and for a strong public health care system. It would be an honour to join the Board of CDM, and to be a part of the organization leading the movement of Canadian physicians advocating for a health care system that serves the public interest.

Thank you and best wishes, Hisham