

Around the CMA

Awards deadline: Nominations for awards presented annually by the CMA must be received by Nov. 30, 2011. Available are the F.N.G. Starr Award, CMA Medal of Honour, CMA Medal of Service, May Cohen Award for Women Mentors, Sir Charles Tupper Award for Political Action, Award for Excellence in Health Promotion, Award for Young Leaders (3 categories), the Physician Misericordia Award (for promoting doctors' health and well-being), and the Dr. William Marsden Award in Medical Ethics. Award descriptions and nomination forms are available at cma.ca (click on "About Us" at the bottom of the home page).

Medical school tuition fees up 4.4%: StatsCan

Tuition fees at Canada's 17 medical schools increased by 4.4% this academic year, to an average of \$11 345 annually.

Statistics Canada says tuition fees for medical students are the second highest among all Canadian undergraduate university courses, although they are still more than 40% lower than the fees paid by dental students. They pay an average fee of \$16 024 — 6.4% more than last year.

Pharmacy students saw the largest tuition fee increase this year (8.8%) and now pay an average of \$9806 annually. The average fee for Canadian nursing students in 2011-12 is \$4809.

The annual tuition fees for Canadian medical students vary greatly, from a high of more than \$23 000 at McMaster University to a low of around \$3,100 at Université de Montréal. (At McMaster, non-Canadian medical students face annual tuition fees of more than \$95 000.)

Recent survey results reveal that Canadian medical students are concerned about their debt loads. In the National Physician Survey (NPS) conducted in 2010, 23% of residents said they expected to have more than \$120 000 in education-related debt by the time they finish training, a proportion that rose to 47% at Memorial University of Newfoundland. The NPS also found that more than one-third of medical students (37%) expected to owe at least \$80 000 by the time they graduate.

The CMA says all future fee increases should be "regulated and reasonable."

Attitudes of new MDs mean medicine is in for a change: survey

What makes today's medical students and residents tick? According to an analysis of the responses 5600 students and residents provided in the 2010 National Physician Survey (NPS), "the ability to achieve a work-life balance, to work collaboratively with other providers, to set [their] work hours, [as well as] the availability of electronic tools" are the factors that will contribute to career satisfaction among Canada's future physicians.

"Work-life balance remains a main determinant of a satisfying practice," the analysis concludes, "with 50% of residents and 53% of students identifying it as the most important factor."

The NPS is conducted every 3 years by the CMA, Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada and College of Family Physicians of Canada. The 2010 results did not surprise Royal College President Louis Hugo Francescutti.

"Medical students and residents are well aware of how overwork may impact both patient safety and their personal health and wellness," he said.

"They have repeatedly indicated their preference for delivering care in a way that does not negatively affect their professional and personal lives. Our system must find a solution to accommodate these changing expectations."

The 2010 results also point to a revolution in practice management, with 82% of second-year residents reporting that they intend to use electronic medical records (EMRs). The survey analysis says this trend will likely influence the organization of practices, since only 39% of practising physicians now use EMRs.

CMA President John Haggie welcomed the new approaches the new doctors will bring with them. "They understand intuitively that they can provide high-quality, patient-centred care by using new technology, and we need to be open to changing how health care is delivered."

Other NPS findings about students and residents include:

- solo practice has all but disappeared as a practice preference, with only 3% of residents favouring it
- almost one-quarter of family medicine residents (23%) intend to continue with a third-year of training in an area such as emergency medicine
- family medicine is the most popular specialty selection, followed by internal medicine, emergency medicine, pediatrics and obstetrics/gynecology
- 36% of family medicine residents and 11% of medical students are now studying at satellite campuses

Complete results for the 2010 national survey are available at www.nationalphysiciansurvey.ca.

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Send your letters and comments for posting online to the editors at cmanews@cma.ca, or by telephone at 800 663-7336, x2700.

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Editors: Patrick Sullivan, Steve Wharry