



CANADIAN DOCTORS FOR MEDICARE | MÉDECINS CANADIENS POUR LE RÉGIME PUBLIC

Health Summit

Charting the Course to Accessible, Equitable & High Quality Public Health Care

Date/Time:

Saturday, March 8
9 am to 5 pm

720 Bathurst Street,
Toronto, ON M5S 2R4

Together, we are building the movement for #BetterMedicare

This marks our first-ever in-person conference, and we're thrilled to welcome you! At Canadian Doctors for Medicare, we are dedicated to building a robust publicly-funded health care system that serves all Canadians.

As we've seen, our public health care system is under severe strain, leaving millions in a desperate situation. We're confronting the stark reality of 6.5 million Canadians without a family doctor and an unprecedented wave of emergency department closures across the nation.

As an emergency doctor, I hear too often of patients who have waited 12 or more hours because they have no other options for care. Meanwhile, ballooning wait times for specialists and surgical care are depriving countless individuals of the medically necessary treatments they urgently need.

The status quo is not working. We're deeply concerned that the false promise of private, for-profit care is gaining traction as a solution to our health care challenges. The evidence is clear: for-profit care does not reduce wait times or improve access — it only increases inequalities, provides lower-value care, and diverts resources away from a public system.

This year, we are committed to making public solutions the standard. From primary care to specialist care—and everything in between—we aim to lay the foundation for effective, practical, and transformative health care reform.

This is why we're hosting the Health Summit—to highlight evidence-based solutions that can strengthen our public health system, learn how we can drive meaningful policy change, and counter the push toward for-profit care. Have a look at the program below!

We look forward to seeing you there,

Dr. Bernard Ho
Vice-Chair, Canadian Doctors for Medicare



Program

9:00 AM – 10:00 AM Registration and Breakfast

10:00 AM – 11:00 AM

Opening Keynote Address: Understanding the Political Climate & Pushing for Health Care Reform



Dr. Ryan Meili

Keynote Speaker

Election season is approaching, and improving access to health care should be a top priority for all parties. But how can we vote for #BetterMedicare during the elections and beyond? We're thrilled to welcome Dr. Ryan Meili, who brings a unique perspective from both the clinical frontlines of health care and his experience in the legislature. In this discussion, we'll explore the emerging threats to public health care and strategies for driving meaningful policy change.

11:15 AM – 12:30 PM

The Future of Primary Care in Canada



Dr. Francine Lemire

Moderator

The primary care crisis in Canada continues to deepen, leaving 6.5 million Canadians without a family doctor. Dr. Danyaal Raza, Dr. Lindsay Hedden, and Dr. Michelle Cohen will unpack the roots of this crisis and outline a path toward creating a high-functioning, accessible primary care system for all. Toronto Star Reporter Kenyon Wallace will moderate the discussion.

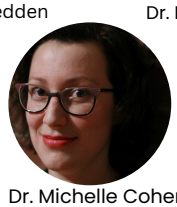
Panelists



Dr. Lindsay Hedden



Dr. Danyaal Raza



Dr. Michelle Cohen

12:30 PM – 1:30 PM Lunch

1:35 PM – 2:45 PM

Sounding the Alarm: The Threat of Private Equity



Dr. Edward Xie

Moderator

Around the world, private equity firms have become more active in owning health-care companies. In Canada, they own long-term care facilities and increasing numbers of for-profit surgical centres. Should we be worried? Armine Yalnizyan, Matthew Tracey, and Dr. Henry Annan will examine the latest evidence and share key insights from Canada and around the world.

Panelists



Armine Yalnizyan



Matthew Tracey



Dr. Henry Annan

3:00 PM – 4:00 PM Networking and break-out discussions

4:10 PM – 5:00 PM

Closing Keynote: Ending Health Care Wait Times



Dr. David Urbach

Keynote Speaker

Wait times are placing a severe strain on our health care system, particularly in Emergency Departments and for specialist or surgical referrals. Dr. David Urbach and Dr. Bernard Ho will review the latest data, reflect on key lessons learned, look at the impact of for-profit surgeries, and discuss public innovations aimed at reducing waitlists and improving system efficiency.

Moderator



Dr. Bernard Ho

Speaker Bios



Ryan Meili is a family physician and advocate for healthy public policy. He has practiced medicine in rural and Northern Saskatchewan, inner-city Saskatoon and Southern Africa, recently spending six months with Partners In Health Lesotho. He is currently working at the West Side Community Clinic in Saskatoon and as a TB Consultant with Tuberculosis Control and Prevention Saskatchewan.
In 2017, Ryan put the concept of politics as "medicine on a larger scale" into practice, running to become Member of the Legislative Assembly for Saskatoon Meewasin and serving as Leader of the Saskatchewan New Democratic Party and Leader of the Official Opposition in Saskatchewan from 2018-2022.
He is the author of two books: A Healthy Society: How a focus on health can revive Canadian democracy (Purich, 2012) and A Healthy Future: lessons from the frontlines of a crisis (UBC Press in 2023).
Ryan lives in Saskatoon with his wife, Mahli Brindamour, and their two sons, Abe and Gus.



Originally from Montreal, **Dr. Francine Lemire** is a graduate of McGill and Memorial University of Newfoundland. Francine worked as a comprehensive family doctor in Corner Brook NL for 23 years, before taking on leadership roles at the College of Family Physicians of Canada for 20 years, as CEO for the last 9 ½ years of that time period. Now retired from active practice, she aims to good citizenship by serving on boards of not for profit organizations dedicated to improving standards of education, and strengthen health and health care. She is married, has three stepchildren and three grandchildren. She loves cross country skiing, swimming and canoeing. She is a past Paralympian.
She became a member of the Order of Canada in December 2023.



Dr. Hedden is an Assistant Professor of Health Services Research working in the Faculty of Health Sciences at Simon Fraser University, a Health Research BC Scholar, and the co-Principal Investigator of the Health Systems Research Lab. She leads program of research that explores the drivers of and solutions to the primary care access crisis with a particular focus on communities experiencing marginalization. Dr. Hedden's current projects address the rapid shift to the use of virtual care; measuring current and predicting future health system capacity and demand; and examining the effects of the increasing corporatization and privatization of primary care on equity, accessibility, and quality of care. She has a PhD in Population and Public Health and has completed Post-Doctoral Fellowships with the BC Ministry of Health's physician workforce planning team, and with the Centre for Clinical Epidemiology and Evaluation.



Dr. Michelle Cohen is a family physician in rural southeast Ontario and an assistant professor in the Department of Family Medicine at Queen's University. She is also a writer and researcher on gender equity, health policy, and wellness pseudoscience. Her work has been published in CBC, Maclean's, Toronto Star, Chatelaine, Healthy Debate, and other outlets. She recently contributed to an anthology on COVID-19 published by University of Toronto Press, and she currently has a book-in-progress on the history of the wellness industry with the same publisher. She has led advocacy work with Canadian Women in Medicine and currently sits on the OMA Women Committee.



Danyaal Raza is a family physician with Unity Health Toronto's St. Michael's Hospital, and an Assistant Professor with the University of Toronto. He is also the inaugural Primary Care & Health Policy Scholar at St. Michael's Department of Family & Community Medicine. His research and writing focuses on health system reform, and the effects of commercial determinants on change. Dr. Raza is a collaborator with the Health Tech and Society Lab, past Chair of Canadian Doctors for Medicare, and the founding physician lead of the St. Michael's Hospital Sumac Creek Health Centre in Toronto's Regent Park, where he continues to practice.

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Speaker Bios



Edward Xie works as an emergency physician and Clinician Investigator at University Health Network and an Assistant Professor in the Department of Family and Community Medicine at the University of Toronto. Edward's academic and community work focus on structural determinants of health. He has extensive experience in planetary health and is currently a Faculty Fellow of the Collaborative Centre for Climate, Health and Sustainable Care.
Edward is also pursuing a PhD in Health Systems Research with a focus on pharmacare, socioeconomic equity and financial protection. He serves on the Board of Directors of Canadian Doctors for Medicare.



Armine Yalnizyan is the Atkinson Fellow on the Future of Workers and writes a regular business column for the Toronto Star. She was senior economic policy advisor to the federal Deputy Minister of Employment and Social Development Canada in 2018 and 2019 and raised awareness of the she-cession and the care economy during the pandemic, serving on a high-level federal task group. Armine advanced the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives' Inequality Project from 2006 to 2016, provided weekly business commentary for CBC radio and TV from 2011 to 2018, and served as Vice-President and President of the Canadian Association for Business Economics since 2017.



Matthew Tracey is a registered nurse and a Doctoral Student in Health Policy with the Institute for Health Policy, Management and Evaluation at the University of Toronto. His research interests include: the political economy of health, the financialization of healthcare, and social epidemiology. He works as an RN at Women's College Hospital and as a Clinical Research Nurse Coordinator at the Hospital for Sick Children.



Dr. Henry Annan is a paediatrician and academic fellow in paediatric emergency medicine at the Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto. He holds a Master's degree in Public Policy and has served as a Board Director on various non-for-profit organizations. His interests include public policy, global health and how medical education may be used to advance these topics.



David Urbach is Head of the Department of Surgery and Director of Perioperative Services at Women's College Hospital, and Professor of Surgery and Health Policy, Management and Evaluation at The University of Toronto. In addition to being a practicing general surgeon, he is a Senior Fellow at the Women's College Hospital Institute for Health System Solutions and Virtual Care (WIHV), and Senior Scientist at the Women's College Hospital Research Institute and the Institute for Clinical Evaluative Sciences. Through his leadership, the Department of Surgery at Women's College Hospital has become recognized for surgical service innovations, such as same-day discharge for total joint replacement and other major surgery, virtual post-operative monitoring, and single-entry referral models for surgical services. His research focuses on surgery-related health services and is funded by the Canadian Institutes for Health Research (CIHR) and Canadian Foundation for Innovation (CFI). David is especially interested in improving health policy related to surgical services in Canada, particularly access to care and the sustainability and cost of surgery in Canadian hospitals. He has written over 250 peer-reviewed scientific articles, including in top journals such as the New England Journal of Medicine and the Journal of the American Medical Association, and has lectured around the world.



Bernard Ho is an emergency and family physician in Toronto, and a Lecturer at the University of Toronto. He has also practiced medicine in BC, Yukon, Nunavut, and the Northwest Territories. He is currently the Executive Vice-Chair of Canadian Doctors for Medicare where he works to advance public solutions that strengthen our publicly-funded health care system. Outside of CDM, Bernard's advocacy work focuses on improving working conditions for precarious workers.

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