



AFMC

The Association of Faculties
of Medicine of Canada

Public Health Education Initiatives

All physicians graduating from Canadian faculties of medicine should be able to incorporate the precepts of public health in their day-to-day practice activities and see themselves as key components of the public health system.

This is the vision that AFMC and its Public Health Task Group have for public health education as part of its Social Accountability Initiative (SAI) in our faculties of medicine. The task group includes representation from the Public Health Agency of Canada, Canadian faculties of medicine, medical students, the community, medical officers of health, the Canadian Association of Schools of Nursing, the Medical Council of Canada, the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada, the College of Family Physicians of Canada, the Canadian Medical Association.

Since 2005, the task group has focused on four main areas:

- Establishing a national consensus on common overall objectives for teaching in the areas of public and population health.
- Creating a support system to enhance public health teaching in undergraduate medical programs.
- Sharing information and best practices from the public health teaching programs across Canada and from abroad.
- Establishing and supporting sustainable student-run public health interest groups at faculties of medicine.

Progress to date includes the formation of the national Public Health Educator's Network (PHEN) with representatives from all 17 faculties of medicine. PHEN members exchange information, resources and experience on public health teaching; support each other in acting as local public health champions to enhance public health education in their faculty of medicine; and are working together to develop new learning resources such as a primer on public health, to better facilitate student learning and faculty development.

The task group has also conducted an environmental scan of best practices that aims to inform recommendations on how to support undergraduate public health education at Canadian medical faculties. Student-run public health interest groups have been funded as pilot projects to raise awareness of and interest among students of medicine and other health professions. Twelve new public health interest groups were funded for the 2007/08 school year, and more will continue to be funded.

We are grateful for the funding and support of the Public Health Agency of Canada for these initiatives.

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