

EMBRACING WELLNESS

HEALTHY MEDICAL STUDENTS FOR A HEALTHY HEALTHCARE SYSTEM

Canadian Federation of Medical Students
Wellness Program



CFMS FEMC
Canadian Federation of Medical Students
Fédération des étudiants et des étudiantes en médecine du Canada



What the CFMS Wellness Program will do for you

Dear fellow medical students,

Please don't read this – not all at once – but if you read nothing else, give me a minute to explain why this is useful.

As medical students, we are inundated with demands from many facets of our lives. We play a strenuous balancing act day in and day out, trying to fit multiple demands from school, family, friends, extracurricular pursuits and recreational activities into a 24-hour time frame. Yet, so many of us find that we don't get to finish what we set out to do, and with stress accumulating day after day, many of us feel overwhelmed. Being a medical student, it seems, can be harmful to your health.

Imagine though, if the opposite was true: imagine being able to actually wake up feeling vibrant and strong, mentally focused, emotionally centred, and ready to tackle the challenges life throws at you.

That's exactly what the CFMS Wellness Program hopes to do for you.

Embracing wellness: healthy medical students for a healthy healthcare system is an important CFMS initiative that will form the basis of a new wellness culture among medical students.

This package is an introduction to the CFMS Wellness Program. But it's about so much more than the pages you're holding in your hands. Whether you're a first-year

or forth-year medical student, you've entered not just a new year, but a new era in medical student wellness. Just check out what's in store for you here.

While we have had wellness days or weeks and dedicated student affairs offices at each school, medical student wellbeing has only come to the forefront with passing importance, all too often taking a backseat to the stresses of upcoming deadlines. This is going to change.

You're changing that. With your help, we plan to fundamentally change how medical students approach wellness – both their own and that of their patients.

We aim to establish a wellness mindset among medical students by providing you with wellness tools designed and customized to your needs. Themes and topics relating to student wellness such as stress, sleep, exercise, nutrition, financial, spiritual, mental and emotional fitness will all be addressed.

We're going to start by offering you regularly updated information, resources, and opportunities for engagement to help you relieve stress, find balance, and work towards a sense of total wellness within your own life.

We are providing you with a free membership and account on the brand new CFMS Wellness Portal at

www.medstudentwellness.ca, where you can sign up using the same code as on the CFMS website. In partnership with the CMA Centre for Physician Wellbeing, the most relevant information for physician wellness will also be accessible through this site as well.

It gets better, though. We've partnered with a major Canadian wellness publisher, WellnessOptions, to create a quarterly publication specially for you called "MedStudent Wellness" and to provide additional wellness content to our website. This will allow us to help you and other medical students across the country keep up to date on the most relevant wellness information.

Regarding this inaugural package, we've organized it for you around 7 high-yield wellness components that are most important to medical students. We've included fully referenced articles on each topic and have special, themed issues that we'll send you throughout the year, with this first issue focusing on medical student stress.

These resources, including this package, are not meant to be consumed all at once. Instead, think of this as a menu of wellness items; pick and choose what you find helpful now, and then put aside a little bit of time to revisit the information frequently.



From the Canadian Medical Association

You know that there will be times later on when you're going to be stressed out, so why not invest a few minutes now to prepare yourself by using the resources in this magazine or on the website? Bookmark a page right now that you'll follow up on and put it at the front of your bag, or put the magazine next to your pillow, or in the bathroom, or slip it into your exercise shoes... be creative! Take a few seconds to sign up on the website, to start reading an article, or to talk to a friend about it. Whatever you do, make the time now.

You've already achieved so much, and you're well on your way to achieving so much more. Along the way, you'll thank yourself the next time a potentially stressful event hits, and you find yourself handling it with ease.

I truly hope you find this helpful, and I can't wait to hear more about your success stories!

All the best,

Ali Okhowat
National Wellness Officer,
Canadian Federation of Medical Students

The Canadian Medical Association congratulates the Canadian Federation of Medical Students on the launch of the CFMS Wellness Program.

This innovative, interactive and inclusive program will help Canadian medical students develop the skills and attitudes that form the basis of healthy personal and professional lifestyles lasting throughout their medical careers.

Medical training can be a challenging first stage of one's medical career, and medical students know best the realities of their own, and their fellow students', issues and concerns. The CMA, therefore, proudly supports the efforts of CFMS members to develop this comprehensive program for its own members; a wellness program developed by medical students for medical students.

This program is a perfect compliment to the physician health programs and services currently offered across Canada. Through this initiative, the CFMS is fostering the development of a whole new cohort of physicians ready to lead by example. Personal health and wellbeing is vital not only to a successful career in medicine, but also leads to the provision of optimal patient care in a sustainable healthcare system.

The origins of the physician health movement in Canada can be traced to pioneers such as Dr. Michael Myers. How proud Dr. Myers must be to witness the growth of interest, knowledge and expertise in this area throughout Canada. The number of physician health ambassadors grows exponentially as today's medical students, the leaders of tomorrow's medical profession, embrace personal health and wellbeing as an issue of high importance.

Together the CMA and CFMS are strong advocates for the wellbeing of our colleagues. We look forward to the impact of this program on Canada's future physicians, and we encourage students to take advantage of the multitude of programs that are available.

Well done and congratulations.

W. Todd Watkins, BSc, MD, CCFP
Director,
Office of Professional Services
Professional Affairs Directorate
Canadian Medical Association



medstudentwellness.ca

The goal of the CFMS Wellness Program website is to create an online centre for wellness that students can use to access resources specific to their wellness needs.

It is hoped that the site will integrate didactic information, user generated content, and interactive resources in a way that will enable the growth of a community of like-minded medical students. These students will, in turn, form the foundation of our wellness culture that will bloom in step with their personal growth.

Sign up today using your CFMS code (the same that you'd used on the CFMS website) at medstudentwellness.ca!

Wellness in mind and in our lives

Wellness is both a decision and a process. A conscious effort to make informed choices on a daily basis is necessary so that we may stay physically, mentally, and socially fit for different life challenges. Habits relating to stress management, sleep, exercise, nutrition, relationships, and work-life balance – to name a few – contribute to determining a person's level of wellness.

Additionally, optimal wellness is total wellness, which cannot be achieved in any one limited aspect or dimension. To embrace health as defined by the World Health Organization – not merely the absence of disease but a complete sense of physical, mental and social wellbeing – we need to embrace the different aspects and components of wellness.

From WellnessOptions

The WellnessOptions team congratulates the executives and members of the Canadian Federation of Medical Students on the launch of the CFMS Wellness Program.

It has been almost two years since your CFMS National Wellness Officer, Ali Okhowat, contacted us about working with him to develop wellness content specific to medical students. His plan was to create a national program that would nurture and promote a culture of wellness amongst Canadian medical students. This would provide busy students with the resources, tools, and supports needed to sustain their individual healthy lifestyle practices.

During this time, we have had the privilege of witnessing the genuine concern of the CFMS for its members and its unwavering enthusiasm in bringing to fruition these much need resources. Along with its members and support from medical schools and organizations across Canada, the CFMS has transformed this vision into the concrete, comprehensive, and unique CFMS National Wellness Program.

We are honoured to be the publishing partner and a major sponsor of this important and innovative endeavour. WellnessOptions is an independent Canadian publisher with a mission to promote and support wellness as a way of life. Over the past 10 years, we have established a solid reputation as a trusted source of health information.

We provide readers with credible, research-intensive, balanced, and relevant wellness content from multiple disciplines, covering the many dimensions of health. Our publications serve as menus of wellness options that readers can individualize for use. It is with the same dedication to evidence-based quality wellness content, and our sincerity in promoting a wellness way of life for all, that we contribute to the CFMS Wellness Program.

A growing volume of research shows that an important benefit of having healthier medical students is having healthier patients. Medical students who practice a wellness lifestyle are more likely to rate it as relevant and to counsel patients on such a lifestyle.

The benefits of the CFMS Wellness Program will reach far beyond individual medical students to members of society at large. In fact, we strongly believe that by supporting your pursuit of a wellness lifestyle, we are also supporting our own health and that of all Canadians.

We look forward to the growth of a population of healthier Canadian medical students and healthier Canadians.

All the best and congratulations,

Y Michael Chan,
PhD, FRSC (UK), CChem, FACB
Publisher, WellnessOptions

Members of the Canadian Federation of Medical Students sincerely thank the following sponsors for their contributions to the CFMS Wellness Program.



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The purpose of the CFMS Wellness Campaign is to promote health and all dimensions of wellness to Canadian medical students, and to challenge them to make sustainable changes in their own lives, while providing them with a rich variety of resources that support and maintain a wellness lifestyle.

By focusing on individual students, it is hoped that our culture of wellness will flourish, thereby benefiting not only medical students themselves, but also their patients, families, communities, and the healthcare system at large.

