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*Position paper*

# **Physician Revalidation**



*Maintaining competence and performance*

*FMRAC Revalidation Working Group*

*4 July 2007*

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# Professional Revalidation of Physicians

**Revalidation:** *A quality assurance process in which members of a provincial/territorial medical regulatory authority are required to provide satisfactory evidence of their commitment to continued competence in their practice.*

**Purpose:** *To reaffirm, in a framework of professional accountability, that physicians' competence and performance are maintained in accordance with professional standards.*

## The Issues

- The public places its trust in the medical regulatory authorities to license physicians who, in turn, are expected to remain competent throughout their practice lifetimes.
- The practice of medicine, including the treatment and prevention of illness, is in constant evolution. Therefore, physicians must be committed to participating in lifelong practice reflection and continuing professional development.
- The demonstration of ongoing competence and performance of physicians is a pillar of professional self-regulation.

## Background

The 2004 edition of the Canadian Medical Association Physician Code of Ethics lists, as a fundamental responsibility, that physicians “... *engage in lifelong learning to maintain and improve [their] professional knowledge, skills and attitudes.*”

The two national certifying colleges, the College of Family Physicians of Canada and the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada, have recognized the need to learn as a fundamental component of maintaining certification. Their maintenance of certification programs require their members to participate in and document their continuing professional development activities. These programs are available to non-member physicians. They provide a Canadian standards-based framework for ongoing professional development.

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While the infrastructure and guidelines developed by the CFPC and RCPSC are able to encourage and ease participation in the revalidation process for physicians, evidence of the extent to which physician learning is linked to their scope of practice and results in maintaining acceptable standards of practice is still required. It is expected that a comprehensive revalidation program will work collaboratively with the national colleges and other organizations to continue to assist in the development of tools and strategies that facilitates the integration of learning within daily practice.

## Position Statement

All licensed physicians in Canada must participate in a recognized revalidation process in which they demonstrate their commitment to continued competent performance in a framework that is fair, relevant, inclusive, transferable and formative.

- Fair:** *The process of revalidation is transparent to the physician, uses fair and standardized tools, and is considerate of cost and administrative burden to the physician.*
- Relevant:** *The process of revalidation is designed to confirm a physician's competence within the scope of his or her practice.*
- Inclusive:** *Revalidation applies to all licensed physicians.*
- Transferable:** *Participation in the process of revalidation will be mutually recognized by each Canadian jurisdiction and will not inhibit mobility in Canada.*
- Formative:** *The process of revalidation is a constructive educational quality assurance process, independent and distinct from the disciplinary processes of the regulatory authorities.*

## Revalidation Working Group

This position statement was developed by a national Revalidation Working Group of The Federation of Medical Regulatory Authorities of Canada

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(FMRAC). The following organizations were consulted and contributed to the development of this position statement. (This participation does not necessarily constitute or imply endorsement of the position paper).

- Association of Faculties of Medicine of Canada
- Canadian Medical Association
- College of Family Physicians of Canada
- Medical Council of Canada
- Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada