

Canadian Federation of Medical Students (CFMS) Wellness Committee:

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Drafted on April 14, 2014, by:

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Background

The Canadian Federation of Medical Students (CFMS) is the representative voice of Canadian medical students to the federal government, to the public, and to the national medical organizations. We are a group representing over 7,800 medical students at 14 Canadian medical schools from coast to coast. It is our mission to provide representation, services, and communication within our membership, and from our membership to the world at large. We are an ever-expanding organization that continually strives to meet the needs of Canadian medical students.

The CFMS recognizes the importance of supporting and advocating for the personal health and well-being of medical learners and professionals throughout their educational and professional careers. Furthermore, the CFMS is committed to advancing the cause of medical student health and well-being through national efforts and initiatives. In alignment with these values, the CFMS has formed a national Wellness Committee, composed of student representatives from CFMS member schools, and dedicated to advocating for and improving the health and well-being of medical students across Canada.

Scope

The CFMS recognizes that wellness is an immensely broad topic with definitions and interpretations that can vary contextually. When it comes to the operations of this committee, we will strive to operate within a holistic definition of health and well-being, in keeping with the World Health Organization's definition of health as "a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity." Within this broad scope, we aim to apply the tenets of the CFMS - representation, communication, and services - to promote the health and well-being of all Canadian medical students. Our approach to wellness will be flexible, erring on the side of inclusion rather than exclusion, and will be guided by areas of greatest need and interest to Canadian medical students. As the CFMS Wellness Committee grows and evolves, so too will our areas of focus and our definition of wellness.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of the CFMS Wellness Committee is to:

- Develop and implement national wellness initiatives that are in alignment with the values and goals of the CFMS;
- Facilitate national discussions about best practices for the promotion and maintenance of undergraduate medical student health and well-being, and advocate for the implementation of these best practices;
- Contribute to the collection and evaluation of information regarding the state of Canadian medical student health and well-being;
- Facilitate communication and collaboration between student wellness representatives and between their schools' individual wellness committees;
- Provide support to medical school wellness committees and medical students across Canada in their pursuit of wellness goals;
- Increase awareness for medical student health and well-being and advocate for improvement in these areas, with a special focus on improving medical student mental health and reducing the stigma associated with it; and
- Liaise with national and provincial professional organizations dedicated to the advancement of physician and medical learner health and wellness (See below).

External Representation

The committee serves as a representative body on the topic of medical student wellness with a voice on the Canadian Physician Health Institute (CPHI) Advisory Committee and the Association of Faculties of Medicine of Canada (AFMC) Interest Group in Physician Health. The National Wellness Officer serves as the external representative on these committees.

The committee will also collaborate where possible with the AFMC Student Affairs Committee on matters related to the health and well-being of Canadian medical students. This collaboration will be facilitated by the VP Services, who will maintain representation on the AFMC Student Affairs Committee.

Committee members will work to facilitate a stronger relationship with and establish student advisory seats on provincial physician health program advisory committees, with the goal of collaborating on the development of provincial and national wellness services directed to meet the needs of medical students, and raising awareness of these services to students.

Membership

The CFMS Wellness Committee will be composed of:

- The CFMS Vice-President of Services

- One (1) CFMS National Officer of Wellness, to be selected by an objective process to be determined by the CFMS Executive Committee, based on applications from the entire CFMS student membership; and
- One (1) student from each CFMS member, to be selected by an objective process to be determined by their respective Medical Student Society, based on applications from their entire student membership.

There will be a total of sixteen (16) committee members.

All positions will be for a one-year term, with the possibility of including multi-term positions in the future, in order to facilitate continuity of the committee's operations during times of transition. Re-structuring of committee membership terms will be considered during re-evaluation of these terms in one year's time.

Responsibilities of the Chair

The National Officer of Wellness will hold the position of Chair of the Wellness Committee. In addition to the responsibilities of the National Wellness Officer, the Chair will be responsible for:

- Organizing meetings;
- Preparing and distributing agendas in advance of meetings;
- Ensuring minutes are collected at each meeting and distributed to all members of the committee;
- Facilitating communication within the committee;
- Providing leadership on committee tasks; and
- Overseeing all subcommittees, and communicating regularly with the chairs of these subcommittees.

Responsibilities of Committee Members

Committee members are responsible for attending regular teleconference meetings throughout the year. If they are unable to attend a meeting, they should inform the CFMS National Wellness Officer of their expected absence prior to the meeting, and attempt to arrange proxy representation if possible. Members are expected to RSVP to teleconference announcements, and contribute to agenda items and discussion during meetings.

The majority of the committee's work will take place outside of the teleconference meetings, on an on-going basis throughout the year. The workload and types of activities will vary amongst committee members, based on regional location, experience, interest, and involvement in ad hoc subcommittees. However, each member will be expected to contribute to work on Wellness Committee projects and initiatives.

Committee members will be expected to provide appropriate representation for and communication with their respective student bodies, reporting committee updates to their members, bringing forward issues and concerns from their school to the committee, and liaising

regularly with their school's CFMS Representative.

Committee members will be responsible for facilitating the selection and transition of newly elected/selected CFMS Wellness Representatives.

Failure to perform required responsibilities and contribute to the committee may be grounds for removal from the committee and replacement with another representative from the member's respective school. Termination of committee membership will be a joint decision involving the National Wellness Officer, VP Services, and CFMS President.

Decision-Making

Decisions of the Wellness Committee will be arrived at with a simple majority vote.

Ad Hoc subcommittees may be defined for special committee projects/activities by consensus at the discretion of the members. Subcommittees will choose their own chair. These Working Groups and the work plan to support them (staff, other resources, budget, etc.) must be unanimously approved in advance by committee members.

Meetings

The CFMS Wellness Committee will meet regularly throughout the year, at least once every two (2) months by teleconference. Face-to-face meetings may be possible when held in conjunction with the CFMS Annual General Meeting and the Spring General Meeting.

Funding

Funding will be overseen by the VP Services and will be available and distributed from the Wellness budget line in the VP Services portfolio. The Wellness Committee budget will be reviewed by the VP Finance and VP Services on a yearly basis and may change depending on the Wellness Committee's planned projects for the upcoming year.

Communications

Regular internal communication outside of scheduled teleconference meetings will be maintained via e-mail and the committee's Facebook page. The VP Services will be responsible for communicating the direction and activities of the Wellness Committee to the CFMS Executive Committee. The National Wellness Officer and VP Services will work together to communicate news and updates to the general student membership through the various means of communication already in place within the CFMS.

Oversight

The Wellness Committee will be led by the National Wellness Officer, who will be directly responsible to the VP Services. The VP Services will be responsible to the CFMS Executive Committee, and report on the activities of the Wellness Committee at regularly scheduled CFMS

executive meetings.

These Terms of Reference will be subject to review and potential revisions one year following their adoption. Any revisions should be presented to the CFMS Wellness Committee and approved by the both CFMS VP Services and the CFMS National Wellness Officer prior to publication.