

MEDIA RELEASE

Toronto's Dr. Curtis Handford named Ontario Family Physician of the Year

TORONTO, November 12, 2020 -- Dr. Curtis Handford of Toronto has been named Ontario's family physician of the year by the Ontario College of Family Physicians.

The *Reg L. Perkin Family Physician of the Year Award* is the OCFP's highest honour, presented annually to a family doctor who provides exceptional patient care and improves the health of communities and well-being of society. Dr. Handford exemplifies the vital role of family physicians across Ontario – as clinicians, advocates, teachers, and researchers.

"Dr. Handford has dedicated his career to caring for our most vulnerable patients, preparing our next generation of family physicians, and acting as a constant champion of the profession," said Dr. Elizabeth Muggah, President, Ontario College of Family Physicians. "His impressive accomplishments have had a significant impact on his peers, patients and community and I am delighted to recognize his contributions with this award."

Dignity and respect amid complexity

Described as humble, thoughtful, and generous, Dr. Handford, who practices comprehensive family medicine in downtown Toronto, counts many of the most vulnerable among his patients. He is known for his ability to build trust with his patients – many of whom face significant barriers in accessing care.

"Dr. Handford treats his patients with equal respect and dignity," says Dr. Lauren Welsh, a former trainee and now colleague in the Department of Family and Community Medicine (DFCM) at St. Michael's Hospital. "His ability to build relationships with his patients is core to his ability to deliver compassionate and patient-centred care."

Teacher and mentor

Teaching family medicine at the University of Toronto, Dr. Handford has mentored students from across Canada in a "sought after" elective in Inner City family medicine at St. Michael's, influencing many to choose a career in family medicine. He also led the development of an innovative Master of Public Health degree at the Dalla Lana School of Public Health targeted to family physicians and other primary care providers.

His contributions also extend to the field of addiction medicine. While working at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, Dr. Handford led the development of a Clinical Practice Guideline for the use of buprenorphine/naloxone as an opioid maintenance treatment, the first of its kind in Canada. This guideline has been endorsed by the College of Family Physicians of Canada and has been listed by the Agency for Health Research and Quality in the US and the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence in the UK. From this guideline, he also developed an accredited and nationally peer-reviewed buprenorphine/naloxone online course for clinicians.

Over four years as the Primary Care Clinical Lead for the Toronto Central LHIN's Mid-East sub-region and now as Medical Director of the Primary and Community Care Program at St. Michael's, Dr. Handford collaborates with local primary care providers, community partners and acute care stakeholders to improve care systems for local patients and their caregivers.

About the Reg L. Perkin Family Physician of the Year Award

The Family Physician of the Year awards, named in honour of Dr. Reg L. Perkin, Executive Director of the College of Family Physicians of Canada (CFPC) from 1985 to 1996, recognize an outstanding CFPC family physician member from each province who exemplifies what it means to be a family doctor: providing exceptional care to patients and contributing to the health and well-being of their communities. The Reg L. Perkin Family Physician of the Year award for Ontario was presented virtually to Dr. Curtis Handford at the CFPC's Awards Gala on November 6, 2020. More information on the Award and on past recipients can be found on the [OCFP's website](#).

About the Ontario College of Family Physicians

The Ontario College of Family Physicians represents more than 15,000 family physicians across the province. We support our members by providing evidence-based education and professional development, promoting and recognizing leadership excellence in family medicine, and advocating for the vital role family physicians play in delivering the highest quality care to patients and families across Ontario.

-30-

For more information and to schedule an interview:

Karen Archer, Consultant
Ontario College of Family Physicians
(416) 875-3778
ocfppare@ocfp.on.ca