

01 March 2021 - Letter to Patients

Retirement Plans - Dr. Stephen Barron

After 42 years of medical practice, I will be retiring from Wilson Centre Family Practice (WCFP) effective 01 August 2021.

WCFP has successfully recruited a young physician (Dr. Elvira Zenone) to take over my position in the group, although she will not be able to start until sometime in 2022.

In addition, I have reduced my weekly hours effective 01 February 2021. As such, it will be more difficult to get appointments with me. Office staff may offer you an appointment with Dr. Gharedaghi or Dr. Afzal, who are both willing to see you when I am not available. They will also cover you while waiting for Dr. Zenone to arrive in 2022.

I will soon be 67 years old. I had planned to continue clinical practice until age 70, but for personal health reasons, I have decided to retire this year. The process of my retirement will be stressful for some of you, and is not easy for me either. I have looked after most of you for many years, and I will miss you. Sadly, because of the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, retiring this year brings the added realization that I will probably not be able to say goodbye to everyone face-to-face.

Over the last few years, I have found it difficult to stay up to date on new developments and new treatments in medicine. I am also finding it more difficult to stay on top of paperwork, and it takes me much longer to get things done. It is important that I retire before my own performance falls to an unacceptable level.

Some of you will be anxious about seeing new, younger physicians, but I remind you that when I started, I was only 25 years old. WCFP has always had very high standards when recruiting physicians to join the group. I am confident that you will receive good medical care after I retire.

Some of you live a long distance from Port Coquitlam. You should consider finding a new family physician somewhere closer to your home. Because I know you all so well, it was not difficult for me to continue as your family

doctor when you moved out of this area. The shortage of family doctors in the province, while not solved, is not as bad as it was a few years ago, so it might now be easier for you to find a family doctor closer to home. If you are able to find a new doctor before I retire, I will be able to write a letter to personally introduce you to your new doctor, in addition to transferring your medical records. For those of you who stay with Wilson Centre, remember that many patients in BC end up without any doctor when their family doctors retire. It was important to me that this would not happen to my patients, and I am grateful that my colleagues are willing to look after you until Dr. Zenone arrives. You should also be thankful.

I regret that I will not be staying at WCFP until Dr. Zenone arrives in 2022, and I struggled with my decision to leave before that. Nevertheless, WCFP has a plan to make sure that your medical needs are covered until Dr. Zenone arrives. I also plan to review everyone's medical record before August to make sure that there won't be any outstanding issues when I leave, like follow-up investigations, specialist referrals or medication refills.

I wish to thank each of you for allowing me to serve as your family doctor over the years. I will retire from clinical practice with many fond memories. Some of you have already expressed anxiety about establishing a relationship with a new doctor. Like most people, doctors have different personalities and different styles. What is most important however, is that we deliver good medical care to our patients.

I am confident that your medical care will not suffer as a result of my retirement. You may have to adapt to a new style of practice, so I ask that you be patient with your new family doctor. Give yourself some time to get used to the change, and give your new family doctor some time to get to know you. Finally, be patient and kind when interacting with Wilson Centre staff, who work very hard, and will also be adjusting to the change.

By the time I retire in August, I am hopeful that the worst of the COVID-19 pandemic will be behind us, and life will start returning to normal, which should also make the transition easier for everyone.

Stephen Barron MD

