

**BRIGHT LIGHTS AWARD**

  
2014

**Board Award for significant contribution to development of team-based primary care  
Dr. Stewart Kennedy**

**A singular commitment to creating a unified voice for primary care**



The Association of Family Health Teams of Ontario's board of directors has presented its annual award to physician Stewart Kennedy, for his work in helping primary care in Ontario develop a strong unified voice.

Dr. Barbara Starfield, a great primary-care researcher, delivered definitive evidence that a strong primary care system leads to healthier people at less cost. But it's been a challenge in Ontario to connect the thousands of primary care providers who represent many different disciplines and models of care. They share many common values, but have lacked a common voice.

Dr. Kennedy practices in Thunder Bay, and has long been active in his community (serving as chair of the district health council) and his profession. It was during Dr. Kennedy's term as president of the Ontario Medical Association in 2011-2012 that he saw the need to bring the disparate voices of primary care in Ontario together.

Starting by gaining the support of his OMA colleagues, he then persuaded leaders of six additional associations — the Association of Family Health Teams of Ontario, the Association of Ontario Health Centres, the Nurse Practitioners' Association of Ontario, the Ontario College of Family Physicians, the Ontario Pharmacist's Association and the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario — to join together to form the Ontario Primary Care Council.

The Council's guiding principle is that primary care is the foundation of the entire health system. Their vision of a strong system is one that is comprehensive, accessible, high quality, equitable and sustainable; and delivered by interprofessional teams working to full scope of practice. They believe coordinating care is one of primary care's most important functions.

The Council holds regular meetings of executive staff and board chairs from all the organizations; they have agreed to focus their efforts on working together to address their shared priorities.

Dr. Kennedy attended medical school at McMaster University and has a master's degree in health administration from the University of Ottawa. He is an associate professor for the Northern Ontario School of Medicine in Thunder Bay.

Because of Dr. Kennedy's vision and effort as the driving force behind the Ontario Primary Care Council, both Ontario's patients and its healthcare system as a whole will have a forum to bring together its strongest advocates for primary care.