



# NATIONAL REPORT ON PLANETARY HEALTH EDUCATION 2021



## WHAT IS THE CFMS HEART COMMITTEE?

The Health and Environment Adaptive Response Task Force (HEART) is a working group of the Canadian Federation of Medical Students (CFMS) that coordinates efforts in planetary health and climate change advocacy among Canadian medical students.

## 2021 CURRICULUM EVALUATION

The 2021 National Report on Planetary Health Education is report which incorporates students and faculty input on how climate change and planetary health education have been incorporated into medical curricula across Canada. This was sent to student and faculty informants from all 17 medical schools in Canada. Surveys were collected between January to March 2021. The purpose of this review is to assess the state of planetary health education at Canadian universities and to give leadership at medical schools across Canada access to new ideas and strategies for developing planetary health curricula.

Students and faculty from each of Canada's 17 medical schools gave feedback on specific domains of planetary health education and the changes that were made to curriculum since the previous HEART evaluation in 2019.

Our student survey assessed planetary health curriculum components in Canadian undergraduate medical education. The information in this table is based on feedback collected from the student perspective, with integration of faculty insight where available. Curriculum components assessed included:

- Integration into lectures
- Problem based learning
- Learning objectives
- Longitudinal curricular integration
- Extracurricular opportunities
- Assessment

## STUDENT-REPORTED TOTAL SCORE (MAX 29)

- |                |              |               |                 |
|----------------|--------------|---------------|-----------------|
| • UBC 24       | • U Sask 16  | • Memorial 16 | • McMaster 12   |
| • U Man 13     | • U of A 13  | • U of C 21   | • UdeM 11       |
| • Toronto 23   | • NOSM 18    | • Western 20  | • McGill 17     |
| • Dalhousie 17 | • Queen's 19 | • Ottawa 20   | • Sherbrooke 17 |
|                |              |               | • Laval 19      |

# SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1. Problem based learning & simulations:** Incentivize medical student engagement in planetary health topics by extending learning opportunities beyond didactic lectures and into small-group problem based learning through clinical cases, and/or simulation activities.
- 2. Indigenous justice, traditional knowledge & environmental racism:** Educate students about planetary health through a reconciliation, self-determination, and climate justice lens. This should be presented in the context of the ongoing impacts colonization and resource exploitation has on the health and well-being of Indigenous communities. In addition, medical students should be aware that Indigenous knowledge systems, which emphasize the importance of interconnection, interdependence, and stewardship of all of our natural systems, are essential to re-envision our health sector to be more sustainable.
- 3. Intersectional integration:** Avoid addressing the topic of planetary health in an isolated fashion. Planetary health curriculum must make the connection between climate impacts and the social determinants of health (including racism, poverty, refugeeism, and gender inequities) in addition to teaching about the downstream impacts of climate change on our physical and mental health.
- 4. Strategic planning:** Develop specific planetary health competencies that are documented within longitudinal strategic plans to maintain accountability and demonstrate high-level leadership and support.
- 5. Collaboration:** Collaborate with and learn from organizations and universities working on planetary health initiatives. The diverse range of projects and curricular developments across Canada highlight the opportunity for schools to learn from each other and build off already formalized education material.
- 6. Faculty and community leadership:** Identify faculty or community leaders with expertise in healthcare sustainability and/or resource stewardship quality improvement in each medical school to meet medical student demand for sustainable healthcare learning opportunities.
- 7. Develop learning objectives:** With student and faculty input, and using available resources such as the CFMS HEART Planetary Health Competencies, medical schools must develop specific learning objectives throughout the duration of medical education to ensure medical students are adequately prepared to practice in a climate crisis.
- 8. Need for faculty leadership:** Ensure there is high-level leadership and support for planetary health curriculum integration. Medical students are leading the development of curricular and extracurricular planetary health educational opportunities. Enhanced commitment from faculty and collaboration between faculty and students is required to meet the upswell of medical student interest in planetary health topics.