

Alberta Doctors' Digest

Shine A Light: Dr. Cathy Horsman

Dr. Cathy Horsman, a family physician in Medicine Hat, demonstrates the kind of commitment to her patients that makes them feel like they are a priority.

In his nomination letter, James describes how Dr. Horsman called him every other day while he was hospitalized and followed his test results closely. She also referred him to a U of A blood pressure study and kept up with his care while on holidays, contacting the study group to ensure he did not miss the opportunity just because she was away.

"Dr. Horsman obviously really cares about each and every patient that she provides care for. We love her and will be broken-hearted when she retires; we will *never* find another doctor with her knowledge and compassion! She is the very best physician in all of Alberta, maybe the country!"

How long have you been practicing medicine?

I've been practicing for 31 years, and it's gone by in the blink of an eye. I spent the first five years in Pincher Creek and the last 26 in Medicine Hat.



"I'm their first stop, and if I can prevent them from going to the ER, it's better for the patient and the health system."

- Dr. Cathy Horsman

Dr. Cathy Horsman

Why did you choose to focus your practice on family medicine?

I was in the second-to-last group of rotating interns to be trained, which then led to a general practice license. As I was going through my rotating internship, I loved everything about my general practitioner rotation.

Back then, post-graduate training was structured so that general practitioners spent more time in hospitals as part of their practice. I delivered babies, worked in the ER, served as a medical examiner and so many other roles. I loved the variety.

What do you find most satisfying about your work?

I have a community-based practice now, and I've known some of my patients for over two decades – I'm seeing the third and fourth generations of families coming to my clinic. Through this longitudinal care, I form real relationships with people, and it's an honour that they trust me with their health.

The patient who nominated you talked about you doing follow-ups while on vacation. How do you balance the need for patient care with self care?

Sometimes patient care comes before self-care, but I do take time for myself so I can be at my best when patients need me. Most patients are respectful of my time away, and when they do reach out, it's because they really need to.

I'm their first stop, and if I can prevent them from going to the ER, it's better for the patient and the health system. I'm their health home, and they do better with the team-based care we provide.

Any final thoughts?

I see the patient who nominated me is worried about my retirement. Let me reassure him that I'm not retiring any time soon.