

Medical Physics profession in Canada has a long and strong tradition of excellence. It was in Canada, where in 1951 Dr. Harold E. Johns designed the first Cobalt-60 teletherapy machine, which later in the same year was used for treating patients. In 1988 this invention was commemorated on the Canadian postal stamp, see figure 1.

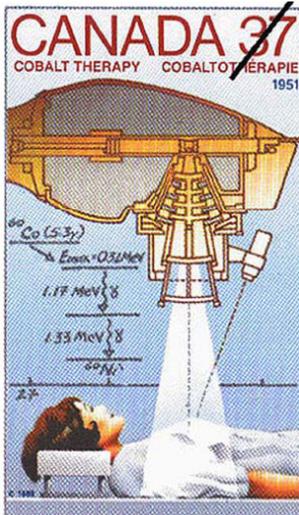


Figure 1. Canadian stamp commemorating the first cobalt-60 teletherapy machine.

Currently, there are over 500 medical physicists practicing in Canada. Clinical and academic medical physics programs are mostly concentrated in large centers, which provide better opportunity for collaboration in research and clinical development as well as training of new physicists. Typical career path of medical physicists starts with a Ph.D. or M.S. degree in medical physics (or related field). This is followed by 2 years of clinical residency, during which the physicists acquires the experience needed for work in a hospital. Excellence in medical physics research in Canada is well documented by a large number of scientific publications per capita.

Most Canadian medical physicists belong to the Canadian Organization of Medical Physicists (COMP) linked to medical physics organizations in other countries through the International Organization of Medical Physics (IOMP). Many Canadian medical physicists are also Members and Fellows of the Canadian College of Physicists in Medicine (CCPM), which was established in 1980 to recognize proven competence in medical physics. Candidates with suitable educational background and experience become members of the College by passing written and oral examinations. CCPM certification is becoming widely accepted in Canada and United States and is required at more senior levels in clinical practice.

Some medical physicists in Canada have European background and maintain professional ties with their colleagues in Europe as well as membership in ESTRO and other European professional organizations.

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