

Further reflections of the president of the Canadian Association of Gastroenterology

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Since my initial written commentary in March, 2002 (Can J Gastroenterol 2002;16:203-4), there have been presentations in the Canadian Association of Gastroenterology (CAG) News Page appearing in every issue of this journal. These updates from committee chairs are intended to provide a clear picture of the multitude of activities that are undertaken in support of the membership of the association.

Congratulations are extended to Canadian Digestive Diseases Week (CDDW) 2003 Implementation Committee including Des Leddin (Chair, Education, CAG), Derek McKay (Chair, Research Committee, CAG), Florence Wong (Chair, Education Committee, Canadian Association for the Study of the Liver [CASL]), David Morgan (Chair, Finance Committee, CAG), Vincent Bain (President, CASL), Remo Panaccione (Local Arrangements Committee), Paul Sinclair (Executive Director, CAG) in their planning of a highly successful CDDW 2003 held in Banff, Alberta. I would also like to extend thanks to both Sandra Daniels (Manager, CAG) and Paul Sinclair for the significant efforts from the National Office regarding the planning and implementation of all aspects of the meeting.

We are encouraged by the large number of CAG members who attend the meeting on an annual basis, and are grateful for the continued support of sponsors from our partners industry - including eight Gold Sponsors (ALTANA Pharma Inc & Solvay Pharma Inc, AstraZeneca Canada Inc, Axcan Pharma Inc, Fairmont Banff Springs, Fujisawa Canada Inc, Janssen-Ortho Inc, Novartis Pharmaceuticals Canada Inc and Schering Canada Inc) of this year's meeting! The GRIT (GI residents in training) course directed by Ron Bridges and the Scholar's (senior medical students and medical residents) program run by Jamie Gregor continue to be 'jewels in the crown' of the CAG. I personally want to thank Ron and Jamie and members of their committees, which put the meetings together, for their hard work, enthusiasm, and encouragement of the next generation of gastroenterologists in Canada.

Awards presented at CDDW 2003 included Dr Kim Barrett as the RD McKenna Memorial Lectureship recipient, Daniel Ménard (CAG Research Excellence), Young-In Kim (CAG Young Investigator), Keith Sharkey (CAG Visiting Professor), and Micheline Ste-Marie (CAG Distinguished Service). An entertaining and insightful presentation on drug design and development in the academic setting by Dr Don Weaver was this year's State-of-the-Art lectureship. New initiatives included the first annual CAG Educational Excellence Award to Dr Claude Roy and the first biannual Hinda Kopelman Memorial Lectureship in Pediatric Gastroenterology presented by Dr David Whitcomb. The annual Awards Ceremony was extremely well attended and represents an important time for us to celebrate and honour the achievements of both senior and emerging members of the gastroenterology community.

A future report by Derek McKay, which will appear in this News Page, will highlight the CAG funding of the next generation of leaders in the field. Support is provided through the awarding of studentships, fellowships, research initiative awards, transition-to-faculty awards and start-up operating grants for new faculty members. These efforts are supported by our continuing partnerships with the Canadian Institutes for Health Research, our partners in industry (Abbott Laboratories Ltd, ALTANA Pharma Inc, AstraZeneca Canada Inc, Axcan Pharma Inc, Ferring Pharmaceuticals, Janssen-Ortho Inc, Nestle Nutrition, Schering Canada Inc, and Solvay Pharma Inc) as well as the Canadian Digestive Health Foundation and the Crohn's and Colitis Foundation of Canada. To all, I extend my personal thanks and appreciation for your generous support of gastroenterology, nutrition, and hepatology-related research and training in Canada.

Planning for next year's meeting is already underway, with careful review of the feedback from participants and full consideration of the results of the recent Needs Assessment survey. As well, we obtain feedback about the CDDW in a meeting held annually with our corporate sponsors/industry subcommittee. One change that already has been implemented is that the meeting will begin one day earlier than in the past. The CDDW will begin with the RD McKenna Memorial Lecture and dinner held on the Friday night (February 27, 2004) and will end on Monday March 2, 2004. This is a shift to one day earlier than had been planned previously; please mark your calendars accordingly and plan to join us in Banff again next year!

On your behalf, I wish to publicly acknowledge and thank outgoing committee chairs, including Vince Bain (Hepatobiliary/Transplant Committee), Jonathan Love (Endoscopy), and Eric Semlacher (Practice Affairs) for their efforts on behalf of the CAG. Cameron Ghent, Rob Enns, and Dan Sadowksi will take over the leadership, respectively, of these committees. Please do not hesitate to contact them directly with your comments, feedbacks, and suggestions for the future.

In summary, I believe it is clear that the CAG provides excellent value to its members. A number of initiatives and innovations related to continuing medical education, training, patient care, research, and advocacy will be highlighted in this News Page during the next twelve months. The energy, talent, and commitment of members of the organization are what makes things happen and moves initiatives forward. You are strongly encouraged to get involved in an area that meets your interests and aspirations. Our common goal is to make the CAG a vibrant and active organization that meets the needs of all of its members. Please do not hesitate to contact me directly (president@cag-acg.org) with your comments, suggestions, and feedback.

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