



En français voir page 191

Reflections of the outgoing President of the CAG

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With the completion of a highly successful Canadian Digestive Disease Week (CDDW) in Banff earlier this month, the leadership of the Canadian Association of Gastroenterology (CAG) has been replaced in an orderly and planned fashion. It has been my honour to serve as the President of the CAG for the past two years. I trust that you will judge that some progress has been made and that not too many errors have occurred during my tenure as the 39th President of the CAG.

I have very much enjoyed working in partnership with members of the CAG Executive, the CAG Governing Board, and the staff at the CAG National Office. It is the formation of friendships and working together towards a common goal that makes participation in an organization such as ours an interesting, fruitful, and satisfying personal experience.

The CAG Newspaper, which appears in each issue of this *Journal*, is provided to keep you abreast of the activities of the various CAG committees (for example, reports have been provided by the Research, Education, Endoscopy and Nomination committees) and initiatives of the CAG. During the past two years, a number of other important advances have been achieved. For instance, we were successful in attracting the World Congress of Gastroenterology to Canada. This international meeting will be held in Montreal, Quebec during the second week of September in 2005. The Canadian Organizing Committee – led by Richard Fedorak – is already well along the way in the complex planning and promotion involved in holding an event that will showcase Canadian gastroenterologists. Many members of the CAG have been, and will continue to be, actively involved in working to make the World Congress of Gastroenterology meeting in 2005 a success.

A council of Past Presidents of the CAG met last summer to consider the future of our organization. A survey of the membership provided the basis for discussion and structuring of a Strategic Plan for the CAG (1). The sage input and advice of the deliberations of the Past Presidents Council was presented to the CAG Governing Board, which developed and approved a Strategic Plan that sets a vision and goals for us to work towards over the next five years (2).

The CAG, in partnership with the Canadian Digestive Health Foundation (3), will continue to focus on issues of public advocacy and lobbying to ensure that the gastroenterology community and their patients are well positioned in the future with respect to having available the necessary supports and infrastructure. This will secure excellence in the delivery of

patient care, advance knowledge in the discipline, and optimize the training and education of both current and future clinical gastroenterologists, GI educators, and GI researchers in Canada. A recent insert contained in the December 29th, 2003 issue of *Maclean's* magazine, a reprint of which was included in each delegate bag at the CDDW 2004, is an example of how we will highlight the accomplishments – and the needs – of the CAG and its members to the public, our partners in industry, and governmental agencies at local, provincial, regional and national levels.

The CAG helped move forward guidelines for the optimal management of nonvariceal upper gastrointestinal tract bleeding (4). The new format used for establishing and updating clinical practice guidelines will set the stage for future statements that are aimed at assisting health care providers in the delivery of optimal patient care. This year the update of guidelines for the management of gastroesophageal reflux disease was held just after the completion of the CDDW. Future gatherings of experts and representatives of relevant interested constituencies will continue to complement our annual meetings.

I am delighted that we have been able to secure a contract to ensure that Mr Paul Sinclair will continue as the National Executive Director of the CAG for the next five years. Paul will continue to provide leadership, while focusing particularly on the goals set within the Strategic Plan.

Please join me in congratulating Des Leddin as the incoming, 40th President of the CAG. I strongly encourage you to get involved in the activities of the CAG and work together with Des to make our organization an even better professional society serving its members, the public, and society at-large in the years to come. If you have comments, suggestions or advice about the activities of the CAG please contact me, or any of the other members of the CAG Executive, directly.

REFERENCES

1. Sherman PM, Daniels SM, Fedorak RN. Summary of the 2002 CAG strategic planning survey. *Can J Gastroenterol* 2004;18:55-6.
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4. Barkun A, Bardou M, Marshall JK. Consensus recommendations for managing patients with nonvariceal upper gastrointestinal bleeding. *Ann Intern Med* 2003;139:843-57

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