

An update from the Clinical Affairs portfolio

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The Clinical Affairs portfolio reflects the most direct interests of the majority of the membership and focuses on issues related to patient care. It encompasses the Endoscopy, Hepatobiliary/Transplant, Liaison, Pediatric, Practice Affairs and Regional Representation Committees. The portfolio is overseen by Dr Alan Barkun, Chair of Clinical Affairs. Its committees have been very busy spearheading a number of initiatives over the past six months, while contributing to a number of projects undertaken by other committees of the Canadian Association of Gastroenterology (CAG).

MULTIPLE COMMITTEE INITIATIVES

Guidelines development and their dissemination

Guidelines (see <http://www.cag-acg.org/guidelines/pdf/CPG%20Guidelines.pdf>) on the development of Clinical Practice Guidelines have been finalized and will soon be submitted to the CAG Governing Board for approval. These guidelines stress an evidence-based approach to the timely development of rigorous recommendations in which selected CAG and other experts participate, as does the membership. A standardized policy (see <http://www.cag-cg.org/guidelines/pdf/Dissemination%20Guidelines.PDF>) for their subsequent dissemination has also been developed.

Credentialing of endoscopic privileges

An updated position statement on the credentialing of endoscopic privileges is being prepared by Dr Robert Enns and the Endoscopy Committee members in collaboration with the Clinical Affairs, Practice Affairs, Pediatrics, Regional representation, and the Education portfolio chairs.

Privacy policy paper

Clinical Affairs has also provided input in a CAG privacy policy (see http://www.cag-acg.org/guidelines/docs/Privacy_Policy.pdf) position paper.

ENDOSCOPY COMMITTEE

The endoscopy committee has prioritized endoscopic databases as a key to subsequent Canadian research programs in the area

of endoscopy. The committee is overseeing the implementation of two multi-institutional databases in British Columbia and Alberta/Ontario, respectively. The eventual goal is to have National Database repositories that can be used for research.

The committee is also spearheading, as discussed above, the position paper on credentialing of endoscopic privileges.

HEPATOBIILIARY/TRANSPLANT COMMITTEE

The Hepatobiliary Committee, chaired by Dr Cameron Ghent, continues to work at improving the coordination and cooperation with the Canadian Association for the Study of the Liver (CASL). The committee also reviews guidelines with regard to the hepatobiliary component of training, and develops hepatobiliary content on the CAG Web site while establishing appropriate links with the CASL Web site. The committee has reviewed the Federation agreement on alternating CAG/CASL chairmanship, and is developing educational and practice 'guidelines' regarding HIV/hepatitis C co-infection management.

LIAISON COMMITTEE

Under the chairmanship of Dr Carlo Fallone, the Liaison Committee has overseen the successful implementation of an International Fellows Initiative, with applications from Bolivia, Mongolia and India. The committee also continues to actively participate in the Federation of National Specialties Societies of Canada and the Canadian Medical Association subcommittee on government spending on technical equipment, and has spearheaded an attempt at establishing regional shared courses with receipt of a positive letter of intent from the American Society for Gastrointestinal Endoscopy that will be pursued.

PEDIATRIC COMMITTEE

The Pediatric Committee is chaired by Dr Kevan Jacobson. Its mission is to increase awareness of pediatric gastroenterology (GI) issues within the CAG, maximize membership and participation of pediatric gastroenterologists within the CAG, promote national collaboration in pediatric GI research, and

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promote excellence in the training of pediatric GI Fellows in Canada. The committee is currently tracking Canadian-trained GI Fellows, and is identifying available staff and fellowship training positions across Canada with a view to posting them on the CAG Web site. The committee has facilitated the seeding of research initiatives that bring together many national investigators, and is working on Web-based projects including a pediatric page and an interactive educational Web site.

PRACTICE AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

The Practice Affairs Committee is chaired by Dr Daniel Sadowski, and a detailed list of its recent activities is included in a distinct newsletter update (see http://www.pulsus.com/Gastro/18_06/Pdf/newe_ed.pdf).

REGIONAL REPRESENTATION COMMITTEE

The Regional Representation Committee is chaired by Dr Michael Gould, and a detailed list of its recent activities will be included in a distinct newsletter in January 2005.

SPECIAL INITIATIVES

Follow-up to the upper GI bleeding guidelines

It is encouraging to note that the CAG-sponsored practice guidelines on upper GI bleeding that were published in the *Annals of Internal Medicine* by Barkun et al in 2003 were among the most requested with regard to abstract and manuscript downloads from the *Annals* Web site. The guidelines

have also been included in the prestigious US Government Web site on practice guidelines, and have formed the basis for a management algorithm that is adapted to Canadian practice, published in the October 2004 issue of *The Canadian Journal of Gastroenterology* (18:605-9).

GERD guidelines

The CAG-sponsored GERD Practice Guidelines have been finalized and will soon be submitted for publication by Armstrong et al. In keeping with CAG practice, the guidelines were posted for feedback (during late August/early September) from the membership as part of their development.

Other projects

Clinical Affairs has also collaborated with the representative on Advocacy and the Chair of the Education Committee in the peer review of papers and/or materials of potential relevance to gastroenterology from an educational/awareness point of view, which industry has passed along to the CAG for review and consideration. Clinical Affairs continues to oversee the CAG input into a special Health Canada Task Force on reprocessing guidelines, through Dr Jonathon Love (past Chair of the Endoscopy Committee).

Input from the membership

Ideas or requests are sought and always welcome and should be addressed through the CAG National Office to Dr Alan Barkun or the Chair of the appropriate committee.
