CMA BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
MAY 2018 MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

National Physicians’ Day – CMA has declared May 1 as National Physicians’ Day, to bring even more visibility to the work of the profession and to publicly express our sincere appreciation to our valued membership. This day is already recognized in some provinces. Support for the creation of a national day is also gaining support in Parliament. In March, Senator Art Eggleton introduced the Bill, An Act respecting National Physicians’ Day, which would create an official commemorative day at the federal level.

Health Summit | Annual General Meeting | General Council – CMA will host its inaugural Health Summit in Winnipeg, Aug. 20 & 21, 2018, to spark a national conversation about disruptive innovation and how we prepare and embrace a future of better health, and how technology can enable and promote patient-centred care and better serve vulnerable populations. Following the Summit, we’ll be holding our General Council and Annual General Meeting on Aug. 22. Plan to attend 3 days of intensive and inspiring dialogue about the medical profession and health care in Canada. The registration fee for all three events has been waived for 2018. Register here.

CMA 2020 – A vibrant profession and a healthy population – The Board heard from Ipsos on the state of the political and economic environment in Canada and about trends affecting physicians and patients, especially in the areas of technology and the health care system. The Board will be reviewing this fall its strategy for determining priorities for the organization against the criteria that will guide the impact CMA can affect on issues and causes that matter to physicians and the public.

The Board also continued its deliberations on realizing the vision of a vibrant profession. Discussions about how to affect change in the health and wellness of our members was highlighted, as well as the issues affecting particularly women in medicine – a move sparked by the #MeToo movement.

The Board received a further report from the President of the Canadian Federation of Medical Students, Mr. Henry Annan on the 2018 CaRMS match results, and the efforts being made to assist new graduates with obtaining residency positions. The Board will review this fall the related impact that this and other factors are having on health human resources in Canada.

Code of Ethics and Professionalism – Dr. Tim Holland, Chair, Committee on Ethics, and Cécile Bensimon, Director, Ethics and Professional Affairs, presented to the Board on the revision of the Code of Ethics. They gave an overview of the extensive conceptual and empirical research and consultations that informed the revision. Further, they reviewed the scope of, and the rationale for, the changes that aim to guide the ethical practice of medicine. In particular the Code has been renamed the Code of Ethics and Professionalism to make explicit both pillars of ethics and professionalism and to account for the increasing emphasis on medical professionalism. They also reviewed the results of the formal consultation with stakeholders, members and patients/the public, which yielded over 5500 comments. The revised Code will be re-circulated to stakeholders to seek further input. As well, the General Council session on the Code will seek further input from members with a view to finalizing a new Code in October 2018, on the 150th anniversary of the Code.

Advocacy initiatives

Proposed tax changes – In advance of the 2018 federal budget, we raised our concerns with the government’s proposed changes to taxation, and in follow up to the federal budget, tabled on Feb. 27, CMA issued two statements. The first was in reaction to the revisions to the CCPC while the second focused on seniors’ care. Thanks in part to all of our efforts, the government abandoned its original proposal and adopted a more nuanced approach — significantly better than what was first put forward. We gratefully acknowledge members’ efforts in sending over 40,000 letters to MPs and the minister of finance since we launched the
campaign last summer. We remain engaged on this file as the legislation moves through Parliament and will continue to keep members informed of updates on cma.ca, through social media and newsletters.

Regulating and legalizing cannabis – As cannabis legislation moves through Parliament, we continue to share our concerns with government and were pleased to see Health Canada take a public health approach to its proposed cannabis regulations. The government’s announcement on March 19 calls for cannabis products to include tamper-evident, child-resistant and plain packaging provisions, as well as warning labels that clearly outline potential health risks associated with cannabis use. This is consistent with recommendations provided by the CMA in its submission to government earlier this year. As legislation moves through Parliament, we presented to the Senate committee on April 18 to once again share our views on public health, packaging and labeling, and streamlining the medical and recreational systems.

National seniors’ strategy – We continue to make great strides in our push for a national seniors’ strategy. With 60,000 primarily public supporters of Demand a Plan, we’re continuing to build on our work from last fall. We presented to the House of Commons committee studying the need for such a strategy. In fact, that committee just released their report after a nine-month long study. They made a total of 29 recommendations, adopting eight of CMA’s 15 recommendations and giving attention to an additional three. The report also included other promising recommendations, such as increasing the quality and supply of home care workers, enhancing the New Horizons for Seniors Program, reviewing and possibly improving rural services, and having the government help address social isolation among seniors through a national volunteer program. This year’s federal budget also took some steps to address the needs of Canadian seniors, including funding allocated in areas of dementia, home and community care, and the impact of gender for an aging population.

Governance – Future Board Model – In our last report, we noted that, subject to the approval of bylaw amendments at the AGM in August, the Board is recommending moving forward with a model that would reduce the Board’s size in 2019 to one seat for each province/territory, as well as seats for our students and residents, President, President-Elect and Immediate Past President and a Chair, and a non-physician director. The Board reviewed plans to achieve this target and also recommended that, in future, the pool of potential candidates continue to include nominations from PTMAs and affiliates. It was also recognized, however, that in the future, sitting presidents and voting directors from these constituencies would not be eligible candidates owing to potential conflicts of interest in serving more than one organization.

Governance – Elections – With the pending culmination of General Council in 2018, subject to bylaw approval, the current election process will need to be replaced. As noted in our last report, inclusion of the membership in electing key positions supports CMA’s efforts to be a more inclusive and member focused organization. In order to make the process more effective, transparent and accountable to the membership, the Board is recommending a few additional changes. Elections for the President-Elect and Directors would take place electronically (online voting). Candidates would come from each province/territory for each director seat and elections would be held within each province/territory for each respective/available seat. Candidates for the President-Elect would continue on a geographic rotation model. Elections for the President-Elect would be held nationally (all Canadian members would be eligible to vote). Elections for the student and resident seats would also be held nationally (all Canadian student members would be eligible to vote for the student director and all Canadian resident members would be eligible to vote for the resident director). Electronic platforms available to all members like the Rounds would be used to profile the national character of the candidates.

Governance – Committee structure – The Board also reviewed potential changes to the committee structure as well as a transition plan focused on attrition. This included the establishment of terms of reference for a new Nominations and Appointments Committee (NAC) should bylaw changes be approved in August. The NAC would promote the opportunities for CMA elections to all constituents including PTMAs, affiliates and the membership at large.

Lastly, the Board elected Dr. Carl Nohr of Alberta as the Board Vice Chair for the 2018-19 association year.