The Canadian Medical Association Presidential Term

Since 1867, the Canadian Medical Association (CMA) has earned a strong voice for Health in Canada and the trust and respect of members - now numbering over 86,000 - by focusing on the needs of Canada’s physicians and health care for Canadians. The CMA President serves as the primary spokesperson for the association.

Nomination and election process

Candidates for the position of CMA President-Elect may be nominated through three distinct processes.

1) practice has been that the provincial and territorial medical association that will host the annual meeting at which the CMA President-Elect will become the CMA President is the only constituency that presents a nominee for CMA President-Elect.

The two other methods by which a candidate may be nominated for the position of CMA President-Elect are:

2) nomination of a candidate by any 50 CMA members, which must be received 90 days prior to the first day of the CMA’s General Council meeting, and;

3) nomination of a candidate at the CMA General Council by five delegates on the first day of General Council.

Presidential duties

Once elected at and by General Council, the CMA President-Elect will serve a three-year presidential term as a member of the CMA Board of Directors and as a member of one of the five CMA officers (the President, the President-Elect, the Immediate Past President, the Chair of the Board of Directors and the Chair of the Audit and Finance Committee) who serve on the CMA Executive Committee (a sixth member is chosen by and from the Board of Directors).

In the first year, the CMA President-Elect assists the CMA President in the performance of presidential duties and is provided with training that will include orientation about the CMA and issues facing the association, how to deal with the media, and other training as required by organizational needs and individual competencies. The CMA President-Elect assumes the office of the CMA President at the time of the next annual meeting and serves as CMA President for the subsequent association year.

In the second year, the CMA President, as the senior elected officer and the primary spokesperson of the association, delivers an inaugural presidential address at the General Council meeting and becomes chair of the CMA Executive Committee. As well, the CMA President has a number of speaking engagements throughout the year, such as at the annual meetings of the provincial/territorial medical associations, parliamentary committees and stakeholder organizations.

The Presidential duties are shared with the CMA President-Elect and the CMA Past President in order to:

- allow for representation at more than one event when there is a conflict;
- ensure that the person with expertise on a given issue is speaking on behalf of the CMA;
- ensure that the person with the appropriate language capacity is speaking on a given issue; and
• provide the CMA President-Elect with opportunities to develop and hone his/her skills prior to assuming office.

The CMA President receives compensation and is expected to represent the association for approximately 150-225 days during their one-year term as CMA President. The CMA President, CMA President-Elect and CMA Past President are each remunerated through an annual stipend and receive honoraria and maintenance allowances when on official CMA business. This is to enable practising physicians to take time away from their practices.

In the third and last year of the presidential term, the CMA Past President serves on the Human Resources and Compensation Committee, as Chair of the Committee on Nominations, and currently presides over the elections at General Council.

Candidates for CMA President-Elect are asked to consider in advance any potential conflicting responsibilities and duties as well as timing constraints should they assume the role of CMA President-Elect and may wish to consider the CMA Board of Directors’ Conflict of Interest Guidelines that are available upon request.

Further information regarding the duties and powers of CMA officers and the Board of Directors are listed in the CMA Bylaws and can be found on the CMA website at www.cma.ca.