

The Canadian Medical Association Presidential Term

Since 1867, the Canadian Medical Association (CMA) has been recognized as a strong voice for health in Canada and has earned the trust and respect of members — now numbering more than 85,000 — 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) The practice has been that the provincial or 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 other method by which a candidate may be nominated for the position of CMA President-Elect is as follows:

- 2) A candidate may be nominated by any 50 CMA members; the nomination must be received 90 days before the first day at the CMA General Council meeting.
- 3) A candidate may be nominated at the CMA General Council meeting by five delegates.

Presidential duties

Once elected by General Council, the CMA President-Elect will serve a three-year presidential term as a member of the CMA Board of Directors, holding the following three positions: President, President-Elect and Immediate Past President.

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 the individual's competencies. The CMA President-Elect assumes the office of the CMA President at 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, performs duties as custom requires, such as attending the business sessions of the annual meeting. 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 to:

- allow for representation at more than one event when there is a scheduling conflict;
- ensure that the person with the most expertise on a given issue is speaking on behalf of the CMA;
- ensure that a 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 before assuming office.

The CMA President receives compensation and is expected to represent the association for approximately 200–220 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 and as Chair of the Committee on Nominations. Currently, the CMA Past President also presides over the elections at General Council.

Potential candidates for the position of 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, which 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.