

ORA: Ongoing Activities

By Arthur Karasik, MD, FRCPC

The Ontario Rheumatology Association (ORA) will continue to advocate for its membership and for arthritis care in the province. We continue to aggressively pursue our organizational priorities, which focus on access to treatment, inter-professional patient-centric models of care, advocacy, and communications. Our endeavours are aligned with many of the goals and efforts of the CRA.

The lead of our private payer committee, Dr. Jane Purvis, has worked diligently with all provinces and insurance companies to develop transparent standardized criteria for access to biologics in rheumatoid arthritis (RA), based on published guidelines. The ORA has been appointed as a representative for the CRA on this issue, meaning these efforts represent a national mandate on behalf of Canadian rheumatologists. The ORA's work with the Ontario government has resulted in modernization of criteria using an ongoing evidence-based process. Leveraging this expertise, combined with experience developed over the past eight years collaborating with the Ontario Ministry of Health, we hope to ensure a consistent approach to development and acceptance of criteria among private payers using a standardized application and renewal form. The aim is to offer a more efficient streamlined process for both the prescriber and the payer (*i.e.*, clarity).

Dr. Vandana Ahluwalia, our director of Models of Care, continues to work with the CRA and the Arthritis Alliance of Canada (AAC). A new arthritis patient charter developed by the Canadian Arthritis Patient Alliance (CAPA) and supported by the ORA's Model of Care committee, the CRA



Dr. Arthur Karasik and his bony colleague.

and the AAC has been developed (see article on pages 8-9). This charter highlights an arthritis patient's rights and responsibilities associated with their arthritis and their care. This is a grassroots project led by the CAPA with input, support, and participation provided by all Canadian arthritis stakeholders. The charter is a reflection of the continued partnership of patients and their healthcare providers as well as all Canadian organizations involved in arthritis care.

The Models of Care Committee has reinvigorated the MedsCheck Program while partnering with the Ontario Pharmacy Association. MedsCheck supports

the provision of high-quality patient care through pharmacist review of complex treatment regimens, facilitating message consistency, and fostering greater rates of medication adherence. More information is available at www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/drugs/medscheck/resources.aspx.

The ORA will continue its work liaising with the government through the Exceptional Access Program (EAP), promoting new electronic medication record (EMR) adoption programs, and supporting our manpower committees.

The ORA is excited to fulfill its organizational priorities and to liaise with the CRA.

*Arthur Karasik, MD, FRCPC
President,
Ontario Rheumatology Association
Rheumatologist
Toronto, Ontario*

Celebrate during Carnaval!

The Carnaval de Québec will take place from January 30th to February 15th, 2015. Snow sculpture competitions are ongoing, as are parades, ice canoe races, and the creation of an elaborate ice palace. See the sights and sounds of the old city as you wander the streets with a strong cup of *caribou*. Be sure to say hello to Bonhomme! Ticket information and complete schedule is available online. www.carnaval.qc.ca/en/edition-2015/preliminary-program-schedule-calendar-winter-activities/

Hit the slopes.

Québec City is perfectly located for skiers and snowboarders alike, in close proximity to le Relais, le Massif de Charlevoix, and Mont-Sainte-Anne. Spend your breaks racing downhill or enjoying a more leisurely pace on cross-country skis or snowshoes. Lift ticket prices and park admission details available online. *Le Relais*: www.skirelais.com/le-relais-ski-snow.php
Le Massif de Charlevoix: www.lemassif.com
Mont-Sainte-Anne: www.mont-sainte-anne.com