

# Accreditation History of the CRA

By Christopher Penney, MD, FRCPC

During 2010, the CRA Board noted that fewer and fewer University Continuing Professional Development (CPD) departments were willing to provide Royal College accreditation for our educational events, such as the CRA Annual Scientific Meeting (ASM). The majority of Canadian subspecialty societies were Royal College Accredited CPD Providers, performing accreditations of their own educational events. Why could the CRA not do the same?

There was some sentiment on the Board that the CRA “brand” on Canadian rheumatology continuing education programs made great sense, since CRA members are the major producers and consumers of those programs. The CRA also needed to represent the CPD concerns of rheumatologists to the framers of the accreditation rules at the Royal College.

I refer you to the following link for a listing of Royal College Accredited CPD Providers and what that involves: [www.royalcollege.ca/portal/page/portal/rc/members/cpd/cpd\\_accreditation/group\\_learning/cpd\\_accredited\\_providers](http://www.royalcollege.ca/portal/page/portal/rc/members/cpd/cpd_accreditation/group_learning/cpd_accredited_providers).

The CRA Board executive authorized the expenditure of \$10,000 in November of 2010, and contracted with Jack Corman and Ron Fehst at Institutional Review Board Services to submit an application for Accredited CPD Provider status to the Royal College on behalf of the CRA. Dr. Carter Thorne and Christine Charnock, with my assistance, spearheaded this initiative.

The application process was much more complex, frustrating, and time consuming than anyone anticipated. Institutional Review Board Services consulted with the executives of several other subspecialty societies, and was given much valuable advice and assistance with the documentation. To comply with Royal College accreditation standards, changes were and will be made to the structure and operation of the CRA.

Our application for Accredited CPD Provider status was submitted in the spring of 2011. The application was thousands of pages long and took hundreds of hours to

prepare. We were granted Provider status for three years effective January 1, 2012. The Royal College required us to undertake to correct multiple partially compliant and non-compliant accreditation standards over those three years. As a CPD Provider, the Royal College holds the CRA to a higher standard than the typical physician association submitting programs for accreditation.

Like other small subspecialty societies, the CRA has contracted with an experienced CPD manager to deal with the accreditation



of CPD events, and to handle the considerable paperwork required to maintain our Provider status. Thank you to Domenica Utano, our current manager, for her expert help. On behalf of the CRA, I also thank the many members of the Education Committee who have assisted with accreditation reviews over the past three years.

The 2015 CRA application for Accredited CPD Provider status was submitted in late 2014. We volunteered to test the new 2015 rules for accreditation and give our opinion on ways to improve those standards. We are now certified accreditors for five years, effective January 1, 2015. Of course, no application is perfect and, over the next few years, we will continue to work with the Royal College to resolve our partial compliance with some of their standards.

Is all the effort expended on maintaining the CRA as a Royal College Accredited CPD Provider worthwhile? I think so. What do you think? Your feedback and/or comments are welcome at [penney@ucalgary.ca](mailto:penney@ucalgary.ca).

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