

Sometimes: Notes from the ORA President

By Arthur Karasik, MD, FRCPC

*"Sometimes, you may have to get lost first, to really find yourself."
- Anonymous*

Admittedly, when I first started my new role I had, as people had warned me, a feeling like a deer in the headlights. There have been struggles of course, and tremendous challenges, but I take pleasure in what the ORA has accomplished. There is no association apathy or myopia. It has been anything but boring!

I applaud our supporters, who have helped us maintain our financial health. This solid financial standing means we have the resources and reserves to be effective in our service to our membership and all arthritis stakeholders. For 2016, we will re-examine, prioritize, and lay the groundwork for our new business plan.

There are many committee initiatives. I have observed our

committee leads, executive, and project managers, and I can say that the pleasure is not in accomplishing an initiative; rather the pleasure is in planning it. Most of you already realize that the foundation of success at the ORA is a strong team of committees and their leads. Some of the executive are seasoned veterans, still skillfully guiding us; I have relied on and invested in their talents in order to maintain advocacy, relevancy, and strategic direction. They have brought creative thinking that leads to a more powerful, unified voice.

For 2015-2016, we will continue to work with the surge in the way we interact with technology (electronic medical records [EMR], dashboards, registries, patient education), shape healthcare debates (Exceptional Access Program [EAP] access, private payers, subsequent entry biologics [SEBs], national Pharmacare), and work to redesign our website communications to target continuous improvement. We will continue Models of Care work, particularly current key projects and knowledge translation. We hope to expand the Ontario Rheumatology Association Development and Education (ORADE) initiative to more members and international destinations in order to enhance our vision going forward. We will continue to represent issues of national interest, such as manpower, private payers, and the Arthritis Alliance of Canada (AAC).

In the last year it has been enjoyable to learn that the president of an association or a doctor does not have unquestioned authority; this role has shifted towards being an effective and respectful team player. No hierarchy, just welcoming full participation of all interdisciplinary healthcare stakeholders who can help to achieve optimal health outcomes, especially for patients with chronic diseases. New realities, involvement, and energies are continuously required to succeed. I encourage all of you, and you know who you are, to just jump right in and take a chance.

"My heart is pounding," I said.

"That's how you know you're having fun," Margo said.

- John Green, Paper Towns

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