

ORA Update

By Jane Purvis, MD, FRCPC

The Ontario Rheumatology Association (ORA) had another very successful annual meeting on May 27-29, 2016, at the JW Marriott in Muskoka. Attendance continues to be strong with more than 200 attendees from across the province. Dr. Janet Pope organized an excellent scientific program, with local and international speakers, which was interesting and thought provoking. Updates in scleroderma from Dr. D. Khanna, on gout from Dr. P. Khanna, as well as cardiovascular risks in inflammatory disease, and an update in dermatology were some of the topics covered. The keynote speaker was Suzanne McGurn, Assistant Deputy Minister and Executive Officer of Ontario Public Drug Programs, who discussed drug access in the province of Ontario.

In addition to scientific presentations, there were booths from various agencies in attendance and a very successful *Walk for the Arthritis Society* fundraiser, which raised more than \$14,000. Educational activities on Saturday afternoon included photography, cooking demonstrations, wine

tasting and a reptile presentation. Saturday evening included the gala dinner where Dr. Vandana Ahluwalia was awarded *Rheumatologist of the Year*, followed by dancing into the wee hours.

The ORA continues to flourish as a result of the commitment and enthusiasm of its executive, board of directors and the membership. The efforts of the group are seen not only in our annual meeting but in the various activities that we pursue throughout the year, and we hope to continue this throughout the years to come.

Our next annual meeting is on May 26-28, 2017, and it already looks like another excellent event.

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Update From the AMRQ

By Frédéric Morin, MD

From one year to the next, I have the impression of announcing major changes in how medicine is practiced in Quebec! And so it is with 2017! Our busy Health Minister is tabling one bill after another in a carrot and stick game. To avoid cuts of up to 30%(!) in our income, we are being asked to accept a process of prioritized front-line access to specialized medicine, complete with performance targets. A single provincial form for rheumatology consultations will be implemented in early 2017. Appointments will then be made by a regional central authority, which means that we will need to give notice of availability three months in advance... We anticipate major disruptions from this bureaucratic entry and intrusion into our clinical practices. Despite everything, the Association des médecins rhumatologues du Québec (AMRQ) remains upbeat and is pursuing its own positive development. Our annual convention was held at the end of September and was a great success

thanks to a synergistic association with members of the Société Française de Rhumatologie. Drs. Anne St-Pierre and Angèle Turcotte have ably prepared a Royal College section 3 credit program, called TOP 3 in rheumatology, which will be offered in spring 2017. Also in 2017, the AMRQ will be organizing a day focused on upgrading the skills of clinical nurses who work with our rheumatologists.

Finally, I would be remiss if I ended without congratulating my friend and colleague, Dr. Louis Bessette, on receiving the well-deserved 2016 *Merit Scholarship* from the AMRQ.

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