
ORA 2017 Annual Report

By Henry Aaverns, MB, ChB, FRCP(UK), FRCPC

We now have a record 207 members in our association, and thus we represent the vast majority of rheumatologists in the province. We are generously supported in our various initiatives by industry and, of course, members' annual fees. Some of our key current activities are described below.

Amongst the highlights of the year was the Annual General Meeting (AGM). We have always aimed at a high academic level and a strong social component for the meeting. This year we combined this with a practice Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE) for trainees. This enabled us to benefit from the presence and enthusiasm of the new generation of rheumatologists.

We work closely with the Ontario Ministry of Health, with strong representation on the Exceptional Access Program (EAP) committee, advocating for access to medications and working with the ministry to help tackle drug shortages. We have consulted on the move to the Ontario Health Insurance Plan (OHIP) + (funding of medications for patients up to 25 years of age). In addition, we have a close and successful relationship with private payers, and recently met with the Canadian Life and Health Insurance Association (CHLIA) to facilitate the move towards standardized criteria for biologics (and their renewal), not only in Ontario but across the nation.

We have defined and developed our vision for an informatics platform and have developed a robust governance framework for this project, which is to create a central data repository for participating members. This will allow comparative analysis of outcome data for use in quality improvement and research. Continuing to help rheumatologists harness the potential of their electronic medical records (EMRs) to achieve the mission of the informatics project is a key principle.

The Manpower Committee is looking at ways to help rheumatologists both at the beginning and the end of their

careers. Specifically, we are focusing on supporting our senior members as they approach retirement, as well as our early career members who are ready to establish their own practice.

We have chosen to honour the memory of Dr. Bill Bensen with an eponymous initiative to raise funds for grants to further the ORA's Models of Care work. We believe this fund will be a catalyst for change towards team-based models of care in the province over the next few years. Our relationship with the Arthritis Health Professionals Association (AHPA) represents an exciting transition towards truly working together and valuing the contributions made by all health professionals who care for patients with rheumatic diseases.

I am grateful to the Executive and Board who have invested a massive amount of their personal time and energy, which is how we have achieved so much this year on behalf of our member.

*Henry Aaverns, MB, ChB, FRCP(UK), FRCPC
Consultant Rheumatologist,
President,
Ontario Rheumatology Association,
Kingston, Ontario*