

## Update from the Pediatrics Committee

By Ronald M. Laxer, MDCM, FRCPC

The CRA Pediatrics group includes all Canadian pediatric rheumatologists and trainees. The executive committee includes the Chair [Ron Laxer], past Chair [Deb Levy], vice-Chair [Bobbi Berard] and Secretary [Nadia Luca]. Executive meetings are held by teleconference at least four times annually and more often if necessary. Face-to-face meetings of the entire committee are held at both the American College of Rheumatology and Canadian Rheumatology Association annual meetings.

In order to accomplish our tasks in a timely manner, several subcommittees have been formed. They include Human Resources (chair Michelle Batthish), Education (co-chairs Mercedes Chan and Evelyn Rozenblyum) and Advocacy. We also try to ensure that all CRA committees have appropriate pediatric representation.

This past year, the committee struck up a relationship with the Canadian Pediatric Society (CPS) to form a Special Interest Group and hold workshops at the CPS annual

meeting. A new sub-committee, Community Pediatrics, has been established and will be led by Tommy Gerschman. This will provide wonderful opportunities for connection for our community pediatrics members. Under the leadership of Deb Levy, triamcinolone hexacetonide has now become available in Canada without the need for a Special Access Program, which will facilitate patient care immensely.

There are many opportunities to become involved with the Pediatrics Committee of the CRA. Please contact any member of the executive to learn about these. We would welcome your input.

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## B.C. Society of Rheumatologists (BCSR) – Update from the Pacific

By Jason Kur, MD, FRCPC



Celebrating the accomplishments of Dr. Bob Offer with his partner Yoli Hassey at the BRIESE meeting in Vancouver in September.

Several projects are underway to help evaluate the impact of negotiated special fee codes in B.C., in particular the impact of rheumatology nurses in the province as well as the changing demographics of the rheumatology community. In 2010, we documented a critical shortage of rheumatologists in BC. In the past eight years we have seen a transformation from 34 full-time-equivalent (FTE) rheumatologists to more than 55 FTEs in 2018. Plans are underway for a provincial rheumatology human resources summit to discuss the inequity in distribution of rheumatologists in the province. Work has also begun to look at the impact of nursing through a collaboration with the Doctors of B.C. and the Specialist Services Committee.

**Provincial mandated non-medical biosimilar switching.** We anticipate that the provincial government will mandate non-medical switches from originator to biosimilar in the coming months, one of the first jurisdictions in Canada to do so. We have been working with the province to try and make this process as safe and seamless as possible for patients and physicians.

Dr. Bob Offer is retiring this year after a highly decorated rheumatology career in B.C. His contributions to teaching, leadership, and patient care were recently celebrated at a reception hosted by the BCSR at the BRIESE meeting.

The Northwest Rheumatism meeting is going to be hosted in Vancouver April 25-27, 2019. Updates are available at [www.nwrsmeeeting.org](http://www.nwrsmeeeting.org)

### B.C. Society of Rheumatologists (BCSR) – Update from the Pacific (Continued from page 13)

In September, the members elected a new board for the Society. Congratulations to the new Board for the next two years. The board includes the following members: President, Jason Kur; Vice President, Carson Chin; Treasurer, John Wade; Secretary, Michelle Teo; and Members-at-Large, Megan Hiltz and Mitch Uh.

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## Update from the AMRQ

By Frédéric Massicotte, PhD, MD, FRCPC

Even though former Quebec Health Minister Gaetan Barrette's term has ended, there remain several laws that have greatly disrupted the healthcare system, even if they were not fully implemented. Luckily, after Dr. Barrette's removal in extremis from negotiations with doctors, the *Fédération des médecins spécialistes du Québec (FMSQ)* quickly came to an acceptable agreement with the government. Under this new climate of collaboration with the Ministry, several committees have been set up to assess the future of medical practice in Quebec. A pan-Canadian study is currently being conducted among the committees to get an actual look at the remuneration of medical specialists in Quebec compared to the rest of Canada and to make adjustments, if necessary. Apart from coercive laws, the Barrette reforms also left behind a new referral process used in specialist practice in Quebec. Therefore, any requests for specialized care in Quebec will be made through a form that is unique to each speciality. This referral process has been used in rheumatology for the last few months. We are still in the early stages, but if good collaboration with the Ministry (and with internal medicine) continues, this new process may be truly beneficial for patients. We will continue to monitor this situation.

Fortunately, the *Association des médecins rhumatologue du Québec (AMRQ)* is holding up well! I am honoured to be reappointed for a second term as president, and some new names have been added to the General Council: Dr. Guylaine Arsenault, Dr. Sophie Ligier and Dr. Lucie Roy. Welcome! These new arrivals will replace Dr. Ariel Massetto, Dr. Angèle Turcotte and Dr. Anne St-Pierre. I would like to personally thank them for their dedication and exemplary work with the General Council and in their respective fields. Their contribution has allowed rheumatology to boom and it has become one of the most desirable specialties in Quebec in the past few years.

This year, the Merit Scholarship was awarded to my colleague, Dr. Denis Choquette. His work, particularly the

creation of Rhumadata Inc. in 1999, allowed Quebec's expertise in rheumatology to stand out at the biggest international conferences. It is important to note that Rhumadata Inc. is the biggest rheumatology databank in Canada. To date, it has more than 5,000 patients and has generated more than 200 scientific abstracts.

The latest *Top 3 en rhumatologie* event, which is a half-day continuing professional development affair, was a success once again. This activity was supervised by Dr. Anne St-Pierre and Dr. Angèle Turcotte. Unfortunately, Dr. St-Pierre has bowed out this year and Dr. Turcotte will do the same next year. The rheumatology community wishes to thank them for this activity that is greatly appreciated and beneficial to all. They have the assurance that we will continue their work!

For the past few years already, we've maintained growing partnerships with our French colleagues. As planned, about thirty rheumatologists from Quebec met with French rheumatologists in Bordeaux in April 2018 to take part in the National Days of Rheumatology conference. Those present can attest to the extreme generosity and exceptional welcome that we received. We have fond (though sometimes vague) memories of this event, and we will be sure to do the same for them when they visit Quebec in fall 2020.

There is not enough space here to highlight the excellence and professionalism of several outstanding colleagues. It is this transfer of knowledge between senior and junior colleagues that is one of the undeniable strengths of our association. This accessibility and closeness between colleagues is a treasure that we must protect. I am proud to be a part of this association which I would actually call a rheumatological family. And, we all know how important family is.

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