

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

By Jason Kur, MD, FRCPC



At the BRIESE Conference in September 2019: A panel discussion with (from left to right) Dr. John Wade, Dr. Mollie Carruthers, Dr. Mark Genovese, and Dr. Iain McInnes

**B**ritish Columbia (B.C.) has continued to be a hotbed of activity over the past year. Nothing has been of more interest than the recent decision in spring 2019 by B.C. Pharmacare to mandate non-medical biosimilar switching for two originator products. Our membership was actively engaged in the design and roll-out of the policy to ensure it was as physician and patient friendly as possible. Thus far, the transition has been going well, despite the added administrative and clinical burden on many offices.

**The Physician Master Agreement:** This year saw a new master agreement between the Doctors of B.C. and the provincial government. Some major advances were achieved. The most notable however is the transition of our labour market adjustment codes (special codes that include the famous B.C. nursing code) from a special, fixed, uncertain, budget to the general fee guide. This is a momentous achievement after 10 years of hard work and lobbying. We are thrilled that this nursing model of care will be the new standard for rheumatology in B.C.

This round of negotiations also saw funds set aside for disparity correction (inter-sectional and inter-provincial). Once again, the BCSR will be involved in the process with an independent arbitrator assigned to this complicated file.

The BCSR had its annual meeting this September in conjunction with the British Columbia Rheumatology Invitation Educational Series (BRIESE) conference in Vancouver. Speakers included Dr. Antonio Avina-Zubieta, Dr. Mark Genovese, Dr. Rick Adachi and Professor Iain McInnes.

We also wish to congratulate Dr. Robert Rothwell who is retiring this year. Dr. Rothwell has had an illustrious career that took him from his training at McGill University to St. Paul's Hospital in Vancouver and, ultimately, a career in New Westminster, B.C. In addition to his clinical contributions, he has been a strong leader and philanthropist, funding medical bursaries at the University of British Columbia (UBC). We wish him well in the years ahead and will miss his wit, wisdom and knowledge of wine, food and art at our meetings.

*Jason Kur, MD, FRCPC  
Artus Health Centre  
University of British Columbia  
President,  
B.C. Society of Rheumatologists  
Vancouver, British Columbia*