

Updates from Alberta

News from Calgary

By Cheryl Barnabe, MD, FRCPC, MSc; and May Choi, MD, FRCPC

Spring and summer 2020 have not been like any other year for us, with pandemic closures and redeployment to support COVID-19 efforts, the subsequent relaunch of clinical activities, the undertaking of numerous COVID-19 research studies, all while home schooling children, having the Calgary Stampede cancelled for the first time in nearly 100 years, and experiencing the fourth costliest natural disaster in Canadian history (a record setting hail storm). We do, however, get to experience the incredible parks in our province with far fewer people in them, and have seen our division strengthened by community and academic practitioners pulling together to ensure continuity in clinical care for the Calgary and South Zones, and ensuring education of trainees remained a priority.

In July 2019, Dr. Paul MacMullan became Division Chief for Adult Rheumatology, as Dr. Dianne Mosher moved to an Associate Dean position for Indigenous, Local and Global Health. Dr. Heinrike Schmeling became Division Chief for Pediatric Rheumatology, with Dr. Susa Benseler becoming the first female research institute director in Calgary as the Scientific Director for the Alberta Children's Hospital Research Institute. We would like to congratulate Drs. Aurore Fifi-Mah (Clinical Associate Professor), Glen Hazlewood (Associate Professor), Steven Thomson (Clinical Assistant Professor), and Cristina Moran-Toro (Clinical Assistant Professor) on their promotions last year. We would like to welcome our new colleagues Drs. Erin Butler, Mehveen Merchant and May Choi to the division. Drs. Martha Decker and Nathan Puhl have opened their practice in Lethbridge last summer, providing critical service in the South Zone.



Dr. Dianne Mosher gladly passing the division torch off to Dr. Paul MacMullan.

Update from Lethbridge

By Martha Decker, MD, FRCPC

Starting a new rheumatology clinic from scratch has had its challenges (particularly during a pandemic!), but we have been grateful to our mentors in both Calgary and Edmonton for helping us along the way. We both graduated from the University of Alberta's rheumatology program in June 2019. Nathan, being born and raised in Lethbridge, was excited to return home, while Martha (originally from Calgary) made the move to Lethbridge to be close to her husband Jeff's parents who live just outside of Pincher Creek. Southern Alberta is a true gem, and we couldn't be happier with the outdoor activities and proximity to the Rocky Mountains. We are looking forward to expanding our clinic in the future, hopefully with a third rheumatologist, to help care for southern Alberta patients.



Dr. Nathan Puhl and Dr. Martha Decker at their new rheumatology clinic in Lethbridge.



News from Edmonton

By Stephanie Keeling, MD, FRCPC

Edmonton rheumatology continues to thrive despite the barriers imposed by COVID-19. Recent graduates from the University of Alberta's Division of Rheumatology Jason Soo, Tharindri Dissanayake, and Saurash Reddy have created a new rheumatology office across the street from the University of Alberta Hospital and are a wonderful addition to the Division. We are fortunate to be able to refer our pregnant rheumatic disease patients to Dr. Sarah Troster who continues to expand her Edmonton pregnancy clinic while collaborating across Canada to create a pregnancy registry. Patient encounters are now quite diverse and include telephone or virtual platforms such as Zoom, in addition to ongoing in-person consultations with COVID-19 precautions.

Northern Alberta rheumatologists are particularly proud of the recent "virtual get-together" launched on YouTube June 18, 2020, to virtually fundraise for the Anthony Russell Scholarship Fund with the Alberta Arthritis Society. Check it out at www.youtube.com/watch?v=o-yqGOyTDz8.



A reading with Dr. Anthony Russell.



Allied health professionals also performed in the virtual fundraiser.