

# News from the Rheumatology Specialty Committee at the Royal College: New Members, CBD Curriculum and Exams in the Time of COVID

By Trudy Taylor, MD, FRCPC; and Kristin Houghton, MD, MSc, FRCPC, Dip Sports Med

Before we discuss updates from the Rheumatology Specialty Committee at the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada (RCPSC), we thought we would first remind and/or enlighten you on the role of the specialty committee. Each specialty and subspecialty has a specialty committee at the Royal College, which is responsible for setting the specialty standards on which training, accreditation, credentialing and examinations are based. In addition, the specialty committee is responsible for appointing the examination board, along with supporting the process of accreditation of residency training programs. Finally, the committee is responsible for reviewing the specialty for any change in scope of practice or overlap with other specialties.

There are two types of committee members: voting members (chair, vice-chair, voting member for each of the five geographic regions); and non-voting members (mainly program directors and examination committee chairs). Committee members serve a two-year mandate, renewable twice.

The past year has been a time of tremendous change at the Rheumatology Specialty Committee. We had a significant turnover in membership, including a new Chair (Trudy Taylor) and Vice-Chair (Kristin Houghton, pediatric) who took over from the steady leadership of David Robinson in July 2019. Also, we have several new voting members, including Rosie Scuccimarrì (region 4, pediatric), Dharni Mahendira (region 3) and Robert McDougall (region 2). They join the “old guard” of Elana Murphy (region 5) and Raheem Kherani (region 1 and community rep) to round out the voting members on the committee who, in addition to standard-setting, play a significant role in reviewing accreditation documents for each of the rheumatology residency training programs.

After years of hard work and dedication, Elaine Yacyshyn and Shirley Tse have completed their terms as adult and pediatric chairs of the rheumatology examination board. Taking over the helm are Michael Stein (adult) and Tania Cellucci (pediatric). In addition to their usual work, the ex-

amination board has faced challenging last-minute changes to the Fall 2020 examinations due to the COVID-19 pandemic. There are no applied exams (OSCE) this year and all candidates will write a written exam.

The last round of updates on changes to the committee membership relates to our program directors. There are 15 adult and 3 pediatric rheumatology residency programs. There has also been a significant change in the adult program directors across the country, with new program directors at Dalhousie (Elana Murphy), Saskatchewan (Keltie Anderson), McMaster (Kimberly Legault), Manitoba (Ramandip Singh), Université Laval (Myriam Allen) and the University of British Columbia (Raheem Kherani). They join the strong group of program directors who have been our fearless leaders in implementing the Competence by Design (CBD) curriculum for our rheumatology residents.

This close-knit group of past and present rheumatology educators has spent countless hours designing and implementing the curriculum for our residency training programs. Together, they have ensured that our Canadian residency training programs equip our trainees with the best knowledge and experience, setting them up for success. The first cohort of residents in the CBD curriculum has now completed their first year! Feedback from program directors is primarily positive, despite the challenges that the COVID-19 pandemic posed since mid-March.

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