

Update from British Columbia

By Jacqueline Stewart, BSc (Hons), B ED, MD, FRCPC

We are in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, and I am delighted to highlight two of our new rheumatologists who, in addition to their busy rheumatology practices, have been involved with the management of COVID-19 patients. This brief snapshot focuses on Dr. Kun Huang and Dr. Daniel Ennis.

Dr. Kun Huang is on staff at Surrey Memorial Hospital and runs a Myositis Subspecialty Clinic as well as the Mary Pack Arthritis Centre. She spends 25% of her time in hospital-based general internal medicine, and also participates in research through the Canadian Inflammatory Myositis Study. Dr. Huang was keen to work on the front line in the battle against COVID and helped the Health Authority make preparations for the emergency response and cared for patients on the COVID ward. Dr. Huang reflects on her recent experience: "The extra donning and doffing and excessive hand washing became routine and easy. You get used to breathing through a mask, seeing through foggy goggles and not being able to sip coffee while rounding. The camaraderie with nurses and other health professionals made the day not only tolerable but fun."

Dr. Daniel Ennis is on staff at Vancouver General Hospital and St. Paul's Hospital. He also works in the vasculitis clinic at the Mary Pack Arthritis Centre and participates in national research initiatives through CanVasc and CanRIO networks. He is also working on the CRA podcast, "Around the Rheum." Of his recent experience, Dr. Ennis says "During the coronavirus pandemic, I have helped in the care of hospitalized COVID-19 patients. I have been humbled by the contributions, sacrifices and kindnesses of our colleagues across the country. They make me proud to be a Canadian rheumatologist in the time of COVID."



Dr. Kun Huang is ready for her shift at Surrey Memorial Hospital.



Dr. Daniel Ennis works at Vancouver General Hospital and St. Paul's Hospital. He is also host of the CRA's podcast, "Around the Rheum."

Arthritis Society Tackling COVID-19 Challenges

The entire world is having to adapt to the demands of the COVID-19 pandemic and the Arthritis Society is no different.

Our patient education resources are helping thousands of Canadians stay on top of their arthritis and cope with the challenges of living through a pandemic, including our COVID-19 and arthritis information page (arthritis.ca/covid-19), our Arthritis Talks webinars (arthritis.ca/arthritisstalks) and our weekly flourish newsletters (arthritis.ca/flourish).

At the same time, we have been working in partnership with the CRA and other stakeholders to ensure the needs of people with arthritis are not forgotten.

We're pleased these efforts are bearing fruit, from the resolution of the hydroxychloroquine shortage, to the designation of medical cannabis as an essential service, to the inclusion of hospital-based researchers in the federal government's wage subsidy program. These wins are a tribute to the collective will of the arthritis community and our ability to effect critical changes in policy when we work together.



- The work doesn't stop there however, as serious issues remain:
 - **Surgery backlog:** Some provinces have begun to announce plans to address delayed joint replacement surgeries, but those plans will need funding and coordination, input from patients, and will need to encompass all impacted Canadians.
 - **Drug access:** Drugs in addition to hydroxychloroquine may be at risk as the pandemic threatens supply chains. As well, many Canadians have lost their jobs and drug benefit plans. It is critical we ensure adequate supply and continued access to necessary medications.
 - **Research funding:** Researcher wages may be protected, but research funding itself is shrinking. While COVID-related research is a current focus, we cannot forget the importance of sustained investments in health and chronic condition innovations that will impact millions of Canadians.

We are calling on everyone in the arthritis community to ask their elected federal and provincial representatives to find collaborative solutions to these challenges. Find out more and show your support at arthritis.ca/takeaction.