

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

By Jason Kur, MD, FRCPC

On the political front, our representatives have been extremely busy. This past year we once again successfully argued for rheumatology disparity funding through a lengthy process at the Doctors of B.C. Extra funding will be targeted to the creation of a complex modifier code, similar to ones that already exist in general internal medicine. In addition, we have been negotiating the transition of our Labour Market Adjustment fee codes (i.e., our nursing model of care) from the budget of the Specialist Services Committee to the General Medical Services Plan. We have also been working closely with B.C. Pharmacare on the transition to biosimilars as their mandated policies continue to roll out (now to include rituximab after the initial etanercept and infliximab changes in 2019).

COVID-19 has brought many challenges to clinical practice, and our leaders have helped ensure the transition to virtual care has gone as smoothly as possible. This has included some outstanding representation by Dr. Tommy Gerschman to ensure community specialists have support for everything from personal protective equipment (PPE) to adequate virtual billing codes. Dr. Kam Shojania has also been our fearless leader in coordinating the rheumatology response for the COVID medicine ward at Vancouver General Hospital.

The 15th annual British Columbia Rheumatology Invitation Educational Series (BRIESE) conference moved content online in September but was no less well attended. Speakers included Dr. Janet Pope, Dr. Jan Dutz, Dr. Anna Postolova and Dr David Fajgenbaum. Dr. Fajgenbaum shared his unique and inspiring story of battling Castleman disease as both a patient and a scien-

tist. Without a doubt, it was one of the most impactful sessions that has ever been presented at BRIESE.

The BCSR managed to host a hybrid Zoom/dinner celebration for the Annual BCSR/University of British Columbia (UBC) award winners in September. The Innovation Award was jointly given to Dr. Kun Huang and Dr. Fergus To for their creation of the B.C. myositis clinic. The Advocacy Award resulted in a tie for the first time and was given to two extremely deserving winners. Dr. Tommy Gerschman has brought his confident leadership style to the BC Society of Specialists and has represented his rheumatology colleagues exceptionally over many years through some challenging times, most recently advocating for community specialists in the time of COVID. Dr. Stephanie Ensworth was also feted for her outstanding leadership role with Pharmacare as the Chairperson of the Rheumatology and Autoimmune Disease Adjudication Advisory Committee (RADBAAC). B.C. rheumatologists are extremely fortunate to have her at the table as a patient and physician advocate when dealing with biologic access concerns. Dr Fergus To was awarded the UBC Medicine Honor Roll Recipient for Clinical Teaching Excellence – both for undergraduate and postgraduate inpatient teaching, and Dr. Brent Ohata was awarded the UBC BCSR Teaching Award.

I would also like to congratulate Dr. Raheem Kherani on his new role as the UBC Rheumatology Training Program Director and extend gratitude to Dr. Shahin Jamal for her tireless work on behalf of the Training Program as she exits the role.

We are truly fortunate to have such accomplished and supportive colleagues in B.C.



Dr. Brent Ohata, winner of the UBC BCSR Teaching Award.



Dr. David Collins – socially distancing himself from all the other guests.



Dr. Stephanie Ensworth, accepting her award via Zoom.

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