

Update on CRA Initiatives

The Canadian Rheumatology Association (CRA) is pleased to provide the following updates on upcoming initiatives:

Telehealth Working Group

The COVID-19 pandemic has forced rheumatologists to quickly adapt to using telehealth and, love it or hate it, telehealth is here to stay. The CRA Joint Count survey (page 26) gives an overview of how telehealth is used, billed, and the challenges our members and patients face.

The Telehealth Working Group is developing a position statement that can be used for advocacy, and is considering the development of training opportunities and resources to help address the needs that have been identified through the CRA survey. More announcements will be made in the coming months. Many thanks to co-chairs Vandana Ahluwalia, Deborah Levy and Brent Ohata for leading these efforts.

Youth to Adult Rheumatology Transition Care Working Group

The Youth to Adult Rheumatology Transition Care Working Group seeks to advance a national strategy to ensure high quality transition care can be accessed throughout the country. Led by Cheryl Barnabe, this group was formed in the fall of 2019 to identify urgent priorities through a CRA needs assessment and an environmental scan. Based on the outcomes of the prioritization, working group members from the CRA and the Arthritis Health Professions Association (AHPA) have engaged in activities to address the needs identified.

Included in that list of priorities is curating an accessible collection of resources to support transition care across the country and adapting transition care guidelines for practice in Canada, which will be published later this year. An educational blueprint will be developed to support strategic post-graduate medical education and continuing professional development activities, and members of the working group are providing workshops on transition care topics and virtual transition care orientation sessions and presentations. To support advocacy efforts, the group is developing a resource that CRA members can use to lobby for the funding they require to support transition care in their jurisdiction. Stay tuned for CRA announcements about these important and much-needed initiatives in the coming months.

National Undergraduate Rheumatology Curricula Project (NURC)

Many graduating medical students lack confidence and competence in the evaluation and management of rheumatic and musculoskeletal disorders (RMDs). A major barrier to improving this situation is the lack of agreement

between rheumatologists on how much and what to teach about RMDs in medical school and a lack of standardization of rheumatology learning outcomes.

The CRA's National Undergraduate Rheumatology Curricula Project (NURC) is currently working towards developing learning outcomes that will serve as a resource for all Canadian undergraduate rheumatology programs. A modified Delphi technique was used to generate consensus opinion of learning outcomes critical to Canadian undergraduate rheumatology curricula and presented at the 2021 CRA Annual Scientific Meeting. Further presentations and publications will be prepared with an overarching goal to nationally disseminate the final list of learning outcomes to all Canadian undergraduate rheumatology programs by summer 2021.

CRA COVID-19 Response Webinar Series

The CRA COVID-19 Response Webinar Series was developed out of necessity at the start of the global pandemic to provide the health care providers within the rheumatology community additional educational resources to assist with their patient outcomes.

The webinars are an Accredited Group Learning Activity (Section 1) as defined by the Maintenance of Certification Program of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada and approved by the CRA. One-hour sessions are developed based on needs identified by the CRA membership, are delivered live, and available on-demand afterwards. Series 1, launched in the early days of COVID-19, drew from lessons learned from other countries and spanned topics on telehealth, SARS-CoV-2 testing and the journey of the rheumatology patient. As we continue to learn more about COVID-19, patient care, and treatments, our members' needs have evolved, and so has the series. Series 2, launching in early 2021, will focus on vaccination and immunity, therapeutics, telehealth and the global rheumatology COVID registry data. For more information, visit rheum.ca/covid19-response-webinar-series/.

National Written Rheumatology In-Training Examination (NWRITE)

The 12th National Written Rheumatology In-Training Examination (NWRITE), for adult rheumatology subspecialty residents, provides reliable and valid national comparisons between residents. The CRA, in collaboration with training programs, delivered this in English and French again in 2020. This formative (practice) exam timing has moved to October to provide feedback prior to the trainees' Royal College exam.