

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

By Jason Kur, MD, FRCPC

As 2022 nears its close, it is a time to reflect on some of the successes in B.C.

We have seen the impact of COVID slowly decline, which has allowed our members to re-engage in the important work of strengthening rheumatologic care in the province. And finally, this work is happening both in person and remotely.

B.C. continues to be a leader in emerging models of care. The crisis in primary care has high-lighted the need for multidisciplinary teams in the community more than ever. We have now had 10 years of experience in the evolution of rheumatology nursing in community practice, and the field continues to expand. Drs. Tommy Gerschman and Michelle Teo have been granted \$1.385M from the Specialist Services Committee (a Joint Collaborative Committee of the Doctors of B.C.) to help specialists develop and implement an interprofessional team care model in their outpatient fee-for-service clinics. Eleven participants, from 8 different specialties (4 surgical and 7 medical, with one being pediatric rheumatology) from all health regions in B.C. are participating in this change model based on the Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI) Breakthrough Series Collaborative.

At the time of this writing, a proposed new Physician Master Agreement is being presented by the Doctors of B.C. for ratification. While the details are just now emerging, there is a considerable shift in the payment model for family physicians in an effort to stem the crisis in primary care. The impact of this potential agreement on specialist care has yet to be articulated, and we will be watching developments closely.

The 17th annual British Columbia Rheumatology Invitational Educational Series (BRIESE)

The BRIESE conference took place in September. The sessions were back in person and more impactful than ever. The outstanding program included international guests Professor Georg Schett from Germany and Dr. Maria Dall’Era from the University of California San Francisco (UCSF). Canadian content was represented by



Award winners (from left to right):
Drs. Anne Marie Colwill, Diane Lacaille
and Maziar Badii

Dr. Janet Pope from the University of Western Ontario (UWO) and Dr. Benjamin Lai from the University of British Columbia (UBC).

Dr. Antonio Aviña-Zubieta also led a lively lupus panel that included all the invited guests. After several years of Zoom fatigue, the B.C. rheumatology community was eager to reconnect, learn and celebrate in record-breaking numbers.

We also took the opportunity to praise some of our finest with the Annual BCSR/UBC Award presentations in September. The Innovation Award was given to Dr. Maziar Badii for his longstanding innovation and collaboration with radiology in the areas of gout and knee osteoarthritis using genicular artery embolization.

Dr. Ann Marie Colwill was awarded the UBC BCSR Teaching Award for her outstanding contributions to the medical training program notably in the area of anatomy teaching. Dr. Diane Lacaille received the Advocacy Award. Her work, known worldwide, has focused on patient empowerment, work success, and advocating for improved models of care.

B.C. is also blessed with some outstanding leadership. I would like to congratulate Dr. Antonio Aviña-Zubieta on his recent appointment as the UBC Rheumatology Division Head, as well as Dr. Michelle Teo and Dr. Barb Blumenauer for their terms on the Board of Directors of the Doctors of BC this past year.

Lastly, I would be remiss without acknowledging the outstanding contributions to B.C. rheumatology made by Dr. John Esdaile. Dr. Esdaile recently announced his retirement. He has guided a generation of trainees throughout the country. His vision and commitment to patients and Arthritis Research Canada have left a legacy beyond compare. He leaves behind at Arthritis Research Canada (ARC) the largest clinical arthritis research centre in North America!

*Jason Kur, MD, FRCPC
Artus Health Centre, University of British Columbia
President, B.C. Society of Rheumatologists
Vancouver, British Columbia*