

# Who's in the Rheum? Dr. Patrick Donio



**I**n this edition of *Who's in the Rheum?* the Canadian Rheumatology Association (CRA) would like to introduce you to Dr. Patrick Donio, who is a rheumatology fellow at Queen's University. Dr. Donio completed medical school at the Northern Ontario School of Medicine (NOSM) in 2020, and Internal Medicine at NOSM in 2023. Dr. Donio is Ojibway and is on-track to become Canada's first First Nations rheumatologist. He recently presented at the Ontario Rheumatology Association's Annual Scientific Meeting, discussing Indigenous Perspectives in Health Care. After training, he plans to return home to Thunder Bay, Ontario, as a community rheumatologist. While serving his home community and the surrounding region, he hopes to focus on helping to address barriers to care, health inequity, and inflammatory arthritis amongst Indigenous populations. Dr. Donio dreams of getting his pilot's license so he can fly up to remote Northern communities to provide specialty care . . . and possibly to catch some fish!



### What is the best thing to do in your community?

Thunder Bay is located on the shores of Lake Superior, in the heart of Northern Ontario. It is surrounded by vast forests with innumerable lakes and trails to explore. If you are up for adventure, pristine nature, and the peace that comes with it, it is one of the greatest things our community has to offer. It is an endless source of wonder and humility.

### If you could think of one rheumatologist or professor who influenced you to get into your field of work, who would it be?

My first exposure to rheumatology was during Internal Medicine training, with Dr. Wesley Fidler. He is the figurative Atlas of rheumatology in Northwestern Ontario. Despite decades of grinding to keep up with an overwhelming demand for care, he maintains an enthusiasm for rheumatology that I found inspiring and contagious. Dr. Fidler is also a dedicated teacher. He helped me conceptualize the spectrum of rheumatic disease, and what we do as a specialty — which can be a hard thing to understand. By the end of my rotation, I realized rheumatology encompassed what I love most about medicine. He has been instrumental in helping shape my future career.

The second *one* rheumatologist who played a role would be Dr. Sindhu Johnson. She truly opened the door for me, providing opportunities to grow and to explore the field and academia. She has been a constant source of direction and encouragement for me.

### What is your favourite activity outside of work?

I have developed a taste for delayed gratification and have been slowly planting a food forest on the land where I hope to one day raise my family.

It will be satisfying, in time.

We're happy to share more fun and interesting facts about Dr. Donio below!

### What made you want to become as involved with the CRA as early as you did?

I joined the CRA Therapeutics Committee to qualify for a travel bursary to the 2024 CRA Annual Scientific Meeting (ASM). While I expected a good learning experience, I did not realize I would be working with some of the current leaders in Canadian rheumatology. The CRA as a focal point for Canada's best was reinforced at the annual meeting, a highly impactful educational and networking experience. It felt like a great environment in which to grow my knowledge and career, while gaining friends and mentors along the way.