

Presidential Address

Thank you, Trudy, for your work as president of the Canadian Rheumatology Association (CRA) in actively engaging with members at national and regional meetings as well as supporting equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) and planetary health initiatives. You truly exemplify kindness in leadership. Given your extensive track record in medical education, you were the most familiar face when I first joined the Board, and it's been a tremendous experience working with you.

I attended my first CRA conference as a University of Calgary internal medicine resident. I was surprised at how many people would greet each other with enthusiasm and hugs—it felt more like a family reunion than a typical scientific meeting. The hilarious Great Debate clinched for me that this community isn't just a group of colleagues but also friends. Thanks to Drs. Susan Barr and Chris Penney and that first CRA Annual Scientific Meeting (ASM) experience, I decided to pursue rheumatology at the 11th hour.

I joined the CRA Board in 2018 and after two maternity leaves and one global pandemic, I'm still here. I've developed a Canadian Medical Protective Association (CMPA) education curriculum, published musculoskeletal (MSK) ultrasound research, built a hospital division of 10 rheumatologists and two Advanced Clinician Practitioner in Arthritis Care (ACPAC) therapists and recently led the CRA Planetary Health Taskforce. Most days, I'm simply a busy clinician with an inflammatory disease practice scope at Trillium Health Partners in Mississauga. I also provide semi-monthly hybrid virtual care for northern Ontario communities with Arthritis Society Canada.

Regardless of our practice type, there are universal themes to our profession. We aim to deliver the best possible patient care within our practice environment, amplify the aspects that bring us joy (i.e. research, education, clinical care) and reduce non-value-added burdens (i.e. administrative paperwork). I look forward to championing the creation of more practice management tools



From left to right: Dr. Trudy Taylor, Past-President of the CRA; Dr. Stephanie Tom, the current President of the CRA; and Dr. Nigil Haroon, who served as President of the CRA from 2022-2024.

and networking opportunities through our current committees and the newly announced Community Practice Committee.

Nous sommes une organisation canadienne, et il est important que nous offrions un environnement accueillant aux francophones. La langue est le fondement de la communication, et c'est en tissant ces liens personnels avec nos collègues que nous renforçons l'esprit de famille au sein de SCR. Je me réjouis à l'idée de mieux comprendre leurs besoins et d'explorer les moyens de collaborer pour nous soutenir mutuellement.

By supporting efforts to expand our practice management resources and grow collaborative networks, I look forward to working with all of you, our new CRA Vice President Nicole Johnson, CEO Ahmad Zbib, and all our wonderful staff. May we continue to build on the work of past leaders, members, and volunteers for a productive future as we adapt to an ever-changing world.

*Stephanie Tom, MD, FRCPC
President, Canadian Rheumatology Association*