Your Council at Work

Council of the College of Physicians & Surgeons of Alberta met in Edmonton on May 26 & 27, 2016 to discuss College activities and provide direction on policy matters that affect physicians and the public. Highlights of the meeting included:

Registrar’s report

- **Continuity of Care Survey** - The College wrote to every physician contacted by phone for the after-hours availability (continuity of care) survey. CPSA thanked those who were compliant, questioned those who might be compliant, and strongly urged those who do not have compliant after-hours capability in place to do so. The response from members has largely been accepting. We will follow-up with all non-compliant practices, and will repeat this survey at regular intervals.
- **Medical Assistance in Dying (MAID)** – Alberta is prepared to offer access to safe and legal MAID services for patients regardless of the June 6 deadline for approved Federal legislation, guided by CPSA’s [MAID advice to the profession](#). The College participates in regular meetings with AHS (as lead), AH and the Alberta College of Pharmacists to plan and support service delivery and implementation. AHS is to be commended for excellent leadership to ensure access for patients.
- **Bill 14** - Physician Assistants will be regulated health professionals under the authority of the CPSA starting January 1, 2017.
- **Clinical Information System (CIS)** - Alberta government has earmarked funding for development of the single patient record. The College sits on an appointed Health Information Executive Committee to provide advice throughout the four-year project.
- **Fort McMurray fire** – Council acknowledged the loss faced by many members and their patients, and reached out by phone to connect with a sample of Fort McMurray members. College accreditation teams will be dispatched to all affected communities to ensure DI and lab services are safe once cleared to go in.

Governance Committee

The Governance Committee is just getting underway, and will finalize its Terms of Reference at the September meeting.

2015 CPSA Annual Report

The 2015 CPSA Annual Report has been approved and will be delivered to Health Minister Hoffman, MLAs, CPSA members and posted on the website.

Changes to Provincial Physician Assessment Program

The volume of physicians requesting an independent practice permit but who don’t yet have all the tickets continues to be a challenge to maintain assessment quality, rigour and safety. Alberta Health Services has made some recent changes to their sponsorship program, [posted on their website](#), that may help manage volumes. CPSA plans program improvements to be gradually implemented in 2017, in concert with AMA, faculties of medicine, Alberta Health and AHS.
Physician Prescribing Program interventions

While waiting for the revised Canadian opioid prescribing guideline, expected in Spring 2017, Council endorsed the thresholds identified in the newly revised Centre for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines out of the US.

CPSA interventions to support good prescribing practice, now and coming, include:

- Education for physicians who prescribe more than threshold levels about good prescribing practice.
- Mentorship and coaching to encourage physicians whose patients are prescribed the highest doses to work with patients in pursuit of opioid prescription options.
- Precise interventions developed for the physicians who need it most based on evidence
- New applications and tools that will allow interventions at a much lower threshold
- Standard of Practice being built around opioid prescribing

For more information visit: http://www.cpsa.ca/physician-prescribing-practices/

Standards of Practice

Council and staff work together to review and update CPSA Standards of Practice on a continuous cycle. The standards of practice define the minimum expectations for professional behavior and good medical practice for Alberta physicians. Council approved the SOP Renewal Plan.

Consultation: Council agreed to send Direction and Control of a Medical Practice SOP, Supervision of Restricted Activities SOP, Practice in Association SOP and Job Action SOP to draft for stakeholder consultation.

Resolution: Following review by Council, resolution on Conscientious Objection SOP accepted; amendments for Informed Consent SOP accepted; and, Medical Assistance in Dying (MAID) SOP (also refer to MAID Advice to the Profession) has been approved with changes to ensure physicians will not be required to sign the death certificate.

PAR discontinued – new competence program reflects extensive physician input

Based on feedback from CPSA members, Council agreed not to resume PAR as a general screening tool. This decision allows the College to focus on developing a new approach to physician quality and introduce phase 1 of the new Continuing Competence program.

Note: all physicians currently engaged in the PAR program will be expected to complete the process. Contact Jackie.Dawson@CPSA.ab.ca with questions.

Building on what we heard from over 2000 physicians in focus groups, surveys and face-to-face conversations, we’re designing a new competence model that will include multi-source feedback as well as variety of tools and resources to help you improve your practice. The new approach will be implemented in 2017 and will provide relevant and timely information that will benefit physicians, and ultimately, their patients.

Look for details in future issues of Messenger as well as through cpsa.ca and email bulletins.