

EXECUTIVE REPORT

Chloé Ward

Vice President Advocacy

August 2012 • Summer Executive Meeting • Montréal, QC



I. DESCRIPTION OF POSITION:

The Vice President Advocacy has a variety of duties related to leading and coordinating the CFMS's local, provincial and national advocacy efforts. According to the mandate of the CFMS, the Vice President Advocacy of the CFMS shall:

- a) Hold the Office of Chair of the national Political Advocacy Committee;
- b) Leads the CFMS Annual Lobby Day on Parliament Hill;
- c) Overseeing and encouraging the CFMS's local, provincial and national advocacy efforts;
- d) Represent the CFMS to various external committees and organizations as deemed necessary.

II. ACTIVITIES

Meetings Attended:

1. CFMS Executive Handover & Transition Meeting Spectrum 1, AGM 2011
Calgary, September 25, 2011
2. CFMS President, T/C, October 2, 2011
3. CFMS Past VP Advocacy Handover (Harbir Singh Gill) T/C, October 10, 2011
4. National PAC T/C, October 11, 2011
5. Health Canada and CSLP Roundtable, Ottawa, October 12, 2011
6. CFMS Fall Executive meetings, Ottawa, October 15 & 16, 2011
7. University of Ottawa UGME Dean, Ottawa, October 17, 2011
8. CMA Health Media Awards, Ottawa, October 2011
9. OMA President's Tour, Ottawa, October 27, 2011
10. National Lobby Day Ask Committee T/C, October 29, 2011
11. National Lobby Day Ask Committee T/C, November 5, 2011
12. National HCT Committee T/C, November 5, 2011
13. National Tuition Project Committee T/C, November 5, 2011
14. National PAC T/C, November 7, 2011
15. CFMS Exec T/C, November 13, 2011
16. CMA Meeting, Ottawa, November 18, 2011
17. National HCT Committee T/C, November 19, 2011
18. Lobby Day Planning Committee, Ottawa, December 1, 2011
19. National PAC T/C, December 5, 2011
20. National Tuition Project Committee T/C, December 10, 2011
21. CMA Meeting, Ottawa, December 13, 2011
22. National PAC T/C, January 7, 2012

23. CFMS Winter Executive Meetings, Toronto January 21 & 22, 2012
24. National PAC T/C, January 30, 2012
25. CMA Media Training, Ottawa, February 4, 2012
26. National PAC – HCT Workshop, Ottawa, February 4, 2012
27. National Lobby Training Day, Ottawa, February 5, 2012
28. National Lobby Day, Ottawa, February 6, 2012
29. National HCT Committee T/C, March 3, 2012
30. CMA - Lobby Day De-briefing, Ottawa, March 5, 2012
31. PAC National T/C, March 5, 2012
32. National HCT Committee T/C, March 12, 2012
33. CFMS Executive Winter T/C, March 13, 2012
34. National HCT Committee T/C, March 29, 2012
35. OMSA Lobby Day Training, Toronto, March 31, 2012
36. CMA PAC, Ottawa, April 22, 2012
37. OMSA Director of Representation T/C, May 5, 2012
38. MP MD Dr. Kellie Leitch, Ottawa May 7, 2012
39. House of Commons Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities (HUMA), Ottawa, May 7, 2012
40. National PAC T/C, May 7, 2012
41. National PAC T/C, June 4, 2012
42. National PAC T/C, September 3, 2012

Portfolio Updates

Priorities and Project Areas (full summaries in PROJECT REPORTS)

Health Care Transformation

During the 2011 SGM in Toronto, the VP Advocacy was mandated with the responsibility of putting together a position on the Canada Health Act and the future of health care in Canada for the next 15 years.

The Health Accord (2004) is set to expire on March 31, 2014, creating a window of opportunity to urge the federal government to take action, thus the Canadian Federation of Medical Students (CFMS) Political Advocacy Committee (PAC) decided to use this opportunity to join the conversation on health care transformation (HCT) as part of this endeavor. Medical students and future physicians have a chance to influence the care that will be delivered to patients. It is crucial to organize and develop a position reflecting the interests, opinions, and concerns of Canadian medical students in order to have the greatest effect.

To this end, the PAC of the CFMS hosted town hall discussions across the country during the 2011-2012 period in order to engage medical leaders of tomorrow. In total, 14 health care transformation town hall meetings were conducted at member

schools. The town halls were generally structured as a 2-part symposium. The first part of the events consisted of a keynote address by an invited speaker, such as elected politicians, physicians and policy experts. This was followed by a moderated student discussion on three discussion points. The three broadly defined topics that were discussed at these town hall meetings were the following:

- 1) Targeted initiatives to enhance the health care system,
- 2) Sustainable health and human resources, and
- 3) Funding strategies.

The national Health Care Transformation committee prepared a toolkit with background information on the Canada Health Act, the rationale for the HCT project and the three universal discussion points.

REFER TO APPENDIX I: *Health Care Transformation: A Guide for Canadian Medical Students*

Each PAC member prepared an event summary report summarizing his or her home town hall discussion, which was used in preparing the HCT paper presented at SGM 2012.

After broad consultation across the country, the committee has compiled a document that outlines and summarizes how Canadian medical students envision health care in Canada presently and over the next 15 years. The document provides an overview of key findings from each symposium, outlines the voice of Canadian students, and is intended as a vehicle for advocacy, leadership, and education surrounding Health Care Transformation. The Health Care Transformation report will be distributed to legislators and other key stakeholders across the country.

Moreover, on February 4th, 2012, the PAC members traveled to the nation's capital for the annual PAC conference. The focus of this day was primarily to discuss the HCT project. Past CMA President, Dr. Jeffrey Turnbull made keynote remarks at this event, as he hosted the CMA Town Hall Discussions across Canada in 2010-2011.

Health Care Transformation Committee Members:

Jemy Joseph

Lily Zhao

Lindsey Ward

Michelle Khan

Negine Nahiddi

Tahseen Rahman

Sana Rashid

Chris Byrne

Chloé Ward (Chair)

CFMS Federal Lobby Day 2012

i) Pre-Lobby Day/ Federal Motion M-289

In fall 2011, the VP Advocacy communicated with relevant Ministers, critics and Standing House of Commons Committee (Finance, Health, Human Resources and Skills Development) members to discuss the underrepresentation of physicians in underserved rural and remote areas and how we can ameliorate this issue at the student level. Subsequently, New Democratic Party (NDP) Member, Bruce Hyer, tabled Motion M-289 in the House of Commons.

M-289: That, in the opinion of the House, the government should extend interest relief to medical residents and postpone debt repayment under the Canada Student Loans Program until the completion of the medical residents' post-graduate training period.

On February 5th, 2012, a national Lobby Day training event was held in Ottawa. At this event, the delegates participated in advocacy workshops and roundtable discussions. Keynote speakers included former Director of Communications to the Prime Minister, Dimitris Soudas; Chair of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Health, Joy Smith; and Canadian Medical Association Senior Policy Analysts, Azin Moradhassell and Pascal Charron.

ii) Lobby Day

On February 6, 2012, the CFMS annual Lobby Day was held on Parliament Hill. Approximately 75 meetings with Members of Parliament (MP) and Senators were held to discuss the issue of underrepresentation of physicians in underserved rural and remote areas. Sixty-three delegates, who traveled from each member school to Ottawa, attended these meetings. After broad consultation nationwide with Canadian medical students, the national Lobby Day Ask Committee proposed the CFMS lobby day 2012 "ask," or recommendations to federal parliamentarians.

This year, as policy-makers consider health care transformation options, the CFMS decided to focus on measures that could more effectively attract doctors to rural and remote regions. Whereas economic and structural barriers hamper efforts to attract primary health care professions to underserved areas, the CFMS proposed two courses of action:

- (a) The federal government should defer repayment of the principal of, and interest on, the federal portion of Canada Student Loan Program (CSLP) loans until the end of students' residency training; and,
- (b) Health Canada should allocate \$50,000 per year to each medical school for the purpose of recruiting candidates from rural and remote communities.

REFER TO APPENDIX IIa & IIb: *Fostering a Physician Workforce to Better Serve the Needs of Canadians / Favoriser une main-d'oeuvre medical qui répond aux besoins des*

Canadiens

Lobby Day Ask Committee Members:

Azim Kasmani

Michelle Khan

Samuel Hetz

Tom McLaughlin

Trevor Skutezky

Chloé Ward (Chair)

iii) Post Lobby Day

This ask was generally well received by parliamentarians of all parties, as it was targeted as a response to federal Budget 2011 initiatives to increase the number physician in underserved rural and remote areas. The CFMS continues to work with Parliamentarians to ensure that all Canadians have access to quality care despite geographic location.

This Minister of Finance's Senior Policy Analyst was also receptive to this ask, and had encouraged the CFMS to have MPs and Senators endorse these asks with letters of endorsement to the Minister of Finance. Lobby delegates were diligent in encouraging the Parliamentarians they met with on February 6th to submit letters of endorsement to the Minister of Finance.

The Chair of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Health has welcomed the CFMS to present before the standing committee in the future to discuss strategies to increase physician recruitment in underserved rural and remote communities.

The issue of underserved rural and remote communities and the CFMS recommendations to improve this issue gained significant attention in the media. Newspaper journalists and radio hosts interviewed many PAC members, the Vice President Advocacy and the President.

i) HUMA Committee

On May 7, 2012, the VP Advocacy and President of the CFMS presented as key witnesses before the House of Commons Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities (HUMA-36, 41-1) as part of the *Fixing the Skills Gap: Addressing Existing Labour Shortages in High Demand Occupations* consultations. The CFMS focused on addressing current issues in health human resources supply and demand. The recommendations made to the federal government are as follows:

“HUMA Recommendations:

Whereas economic and structural barriers hamper efforts to attract primary health care professions to underserved areas, and national oversight is required to ensure that physician training spots meet the needs of all Canadians, the CFMS proposes three courses of action:

(a) The federal government should defer repayment of the principal of, and interest on, the federal portion of Canada Student Loan Program (CSLP) loans until the end of students' residency training;

(b) Health Canada should allocate \$50,000 per year to each medical school for the purpose of recruiting candidates from rural and remote communities; and,

(c) The federal government should oversee a pan-Canadian physician selection strategy that will collate health human resource projections across the country, and make this information accessible to medical trainees.”

The federal government agreed to expand the student loan forgiveness incentive to medical residents, as doctors initially did not qualify for the program until after residency. This was announced by Human Resources and Skills Development (HRSDC) in August 2012.

See article: <http://news.gc.ca/web/article-eng.do?nid=689099>

Partnership with the Canadian Medical Association

In April 2012, the VP Advocacy was asked to make recommendations to the Canadian Medical Association (CMA) PAC Committee as to how the CMA could further support the advocacy efforts of Canadian medical students. Ideas of how the CMA can actively facilitate the incorporation of increased formal training in the techniques of advocacy and leadership in the undergraduate and postgraduate medical curricula were discussed. Specific recommendations include interactive education sessions, early exposure, mentorship, hands-on student-directed projects and longitudinal programs with incentivization via top-down faculty accreditation.

The VP Advocacy updated the CMA PAC on all of the advocacy endeavors of 2011-2012 and the CMA PAC subsequently proposed to support the CFMS lobby day ask at the physician level. The following motion was passed at the CMA General Council 2012 in Yellowknife, NWT.

“50. The Canadian Medical Association will support the 2012-13 advocacy efforts of the Canadian Federation of Medical Students to attract physicians to rural and remote regions. (DM 5-52)”

Federal Pre-Budget Consultations

In August 2012, the VP Advocacy took part in the federal pre-budget consultations. Recommendations for Budget 2013 to the federal Minister of Finance and House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance were made. The focus of the recommendations was to further advocate for the CFMS federal lobby day 2012 asks, and to reiterate many of the recommendations made before the HUMA Committee in May 2012.

Tuition Project

When surveyed, medical students across Canada, continuously indicate that medical school tuition is at the top of their priorities. Historically, it has been challenging to launch any form of campaign concerning medical student tuition, as there lacks significant information regarding the cost of undergraduate medical education (UGME), government fund allocation and the specific distribution of the funds within universities and academic centers.

A national Tuition Project Committee within the PAC has been struck, which has focused on communicating with each member school to

- a) Discuss UGME funding at their respective academic institution,
- b) Draft a nationwide survey targeted at obtaining information pertaining to demographics, tuition, government student loans, private student loans and personal finances;
- c) Communication with relevant stakeholders, including the National Student Loans' Center.

The committee has made significant progress in obtaining information on medical school tuition, which has immense potential for future PAC advocacy campaigns. Specifically, the committee has obtained detailed statistics on government loans for each school, including accumulated debt, time to repayment and interest paid from HRSDC Access to Information. The committee has also finalized a tuition survey that will be distributed to all Canadian medical students in fall 2012. With the information obtained from HRSDC and the tuition results to come, the committee is projecting that a tuition report will be compiled before lobby day 2013.

Tuition Project Committee Members:

Jill Caines

Joanna Gotfrit

Wilson Kwong

Chloé Ward (Chair)

Position Papers

The VP Advocacy was mandated to review the International Medical Graduate (IMG) position paper based on a motion that was passed at SGM 2012. A working group comprised of the members below was struck to make appropriate revisions to this important position paper. The revised IMG position paper will be presented and debated at AGM 2012.

IMG Review Committee

Elisa Kharizi, Mimi Lerner, Connor Forbes (University of British Columbia)

Alyssa Cruz (University of Alberta)

Chloé Ward (University of Ottawa, Chair)

Grassroots Initiatives

The PAC has undertaken innumerable grassroots advocacy initiatives at member schools. Two featured projects include:

i) Inter-professional Education

University of Ottawa students conducted broad consultations and have compiled a summary of the inter-professional education (IPE) projects and IPE curriculum overview at each of our member schools. The PAC discussed the fundamental value in IPE, and in turn, transforming our health care system through medical education (report pending).

Ottawa PAC Members:

Hana Alazem

Sana Rashid

Saadia Sediqzadah

Shayda Ziai

Weiwei Beckerleg

Jemy Joseph

Chloé Ward

ii) University of British Columbia Admissions Site

University of British Columbia (UBC) medical students have shot a pilot video that will be featured on the UBC Admissions site, with the goal of empowering students from underrepresented groups in medicine to apply to medical school. Changing the attitudes and culture of pre-medical students from a generally discouraging attitude to one that encourages students from adverse backgrounds is a shift that should come from medical students themselves.

UBC Committee Members:

Lawrance Chow

Trevor Skutezky

Provincial Business

Numerous provincial lobby efforts are taking place across the country at both the grassroots and provincial levels. Many provinces have had successful lobby days, including Alberta and Ontario. Presently, Manitoba is working on organizing a national letter writing campaign to support the federal bill sponsored by MP James Bezan that relates to tanning bed legislation. Saskatchewan has had great success in addressing the issue of tanning bed legislation. Newfoundland is looking to have a lobby day to remind the government how important low tuition is and to address methods of physician recruitment. Prince Edward Island (PEI) has been working closely with politicians to address the mandatory return of issue that has arisen, and plans to have a lobby day on the island. Despite overseeing and facilitating many of the provincial lobby efforts, the following are some issues of focus:

1. Bill 506 in the Alberta Legislature

The Vice President Advocacy endorsed a Motion in the Alberta Legislature during fall 2011, which passed to Bill-506:

Postsecondary Student Funding Review

506. Ms Woo-Paw moved: □ Be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly urge the government to review the procedures and rules that determine postsecondary student funding to ensure that student funding meets the diverse and evolving needs of students in the 21st century.

2. Prince Edward Island Return of Service

During the last PEI provincial election, the PEI Liberal Party outlined in their platform the following a position regarding enhanced physician recruitment to the island that would force PEI who study in provincially sponsored seats to sign a return of service agreement.

“Enhanced Doctor recruitment:

Over the past several years, the number of physicians practicing on Prince Edward Island has risen to 218 from 196. This increase was due to a concerted effort to recruit doctors to our province. One of the most significant initiatives supporting this task was securing medical training seats at both Dalhousie and Memorial Universities. Currently, Prince Edward Island has access to 4 training seats annually at Memorial, in Newfoundland. In the future, Island students who attend Memorial in provincially sponsored medical seats will be required to sign an agreement to practice in the province for 5 years...”

The Liberal Party elect has indicated that they plan to move forward with this. The Vice President Advocacy has played an integral part in overseeing the advocacy efforts of the PEI students. The PEI students have voiced their concerns with a mandatory return of service through meetings with the Minister of Health and Wellness, politicians and

faculty members, and through the media at both the national and local levels. The CFMS supports PEI students in this.

Health Canada – Food and Drugs Act Liaison Office Consultations

In October, Health Canada invited stakeholders to participate in the online consultation on the proposed Phase II of the Summary Basis of Decision (SBD) initiative. SBD documents describe the rationale for Health Canada's decision to authorize the sale of certain drugs and medical devices. The Vice President Advocacy took part in these consultations, and the final report, *Food and Drugs Act Liaison Office: Report on Activities 2010–2011* can be found on the Health Canada site.

Global Health Advocacy Collaboration

Several PACs were involved in co-organizing advocacy training events with their global health advocacy (GHA) colleagues. Various advocacy-training events were organized across the country, with many member schools opting to host a letter writing campaign to address the implications of Bill C-31 (formerly Bill C-4), relating to refugee rights. Moreover, the Canadian Medical Association (CMA) hosted advocacy training events at member schools across the country, which the PAC, along with GHA were involved with. Great progress has been made in the area of PAC and GHA collaboration. The PAC supports a continually strengthening relationship between these two groups moving forward.

III. FOLLOW-UP AND VISION, GOALS, SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THIS POSITION

1. Move Lobby Day to the fall

Aligning the CFMS Lobby Day with the parliamentary budget calendar would immensely improve our lobby efforts. Pre-budget consultations typically begin in the summer, with budget day following in early spring, thus a late winter lobby day is rather untimely. This has been an ongoing recommendation of the Vice President Advocacy that should be remedied in years to come.

2. Prepare Parliamentarian Endorsement of Lobby Day Ask on Lobby Day

It has been common practice for the Vice President and the PAC to prepare Parliamentarian letters endorsing the lobby day ask shortly following lobby day. However, it would be good practice to have a team of delegates on lobby day to be preparing template letters in between meetings. This would allow the PAC to incorporate feedback from the Members and Senators and to compose a strong template letter that each delegate can modify in a timely and efficient manner.

3. Vice President Advocacy to sit on the CMA Committee on Political Action

The CFMS currently holds a student position on the CMA Committee on Political Action, which is filled by an external delegate. In the future, the Vice President Advocacy will fill this position.

4. Continue to collaborate with the GHA on Advocacy Training

A tremendous amount of students were engaged in the CMA-GHA-PAC advocacy training events this year. Student advocacy is a vital skill. As future physicians, medical students have tremendous influence with the public and should use this to advocate for the best health care and healthcare system. Thus, advocacy training is of vital during medical education. There is also tremendous opportunity for the PAC to collaborate with the GHA for internal training events, such as the Global Health fall advocacy training weekend.

5. Continuous federal advocacy on the Hill

Encourage continuous advocacy of the lobby day recommendations, as CFMS lobbying should be more of a continuous effort rather than simply one annual lobby day. This strategy should help facilitate our efforts and allow us to see our recommendations to the Government of Canada in the federal budget. The VP Advocacy and PAC should aim to testify as a key witness before a House of Commons Standing Committee annually, and continue to submit federal pre-budget consultations to the Minister of Finance annually. Lobby Day delegates and PAC members should strive to keep communication open with the MPs they met with at lobby day.

6. Nationwide Town Halls

Although the HCT Town Halls at medical schools across the country was a new initiative this year, it proved to be highly successful. This type of nationwide collaborative and uniform event could be repeated annually to continue to engage and inform medical students. The theme can be changed, depending on the political climate. However, the focus should continue to make aware as many medical students as possible of our role in physician advocacy and health care innovation for improved delivery of patient care across the country.