

Under the guidance of our scientific director, Dr. Janet Pope, we had a successful AGM; we continue to engage in practice enhancement initiatives, such as the OBRI and Metrix. Dr. Carter Thorne remains on the board of directors as an active consultant and mentor. Denice Morrice, our executive director, sits on many boards and represents us to various patient, physician and government organizations. I am looking forward to working with our committed board of directors, executive and administrative staff who tirelessly

indulge my proposals for yet another project that must be done. As this year closes, I reflect back on the beginnings of the ORA to realize how far we have really come, but there is still much more work to be done!

*Vandana Ahluwalia, MD, FRCPC
President, Ontario Rheumatology Association (ORA)
Brampton, Ontario*

Quebec Rheumatology Association

By Denis Choquette, MD, FRCPC

Good news from the Quebec Rheumatology Association (QRA): The last 12 months of intense work at the Association have been very productive and very positive. In Quebec, the Association has to be accredited to deliver Continuing Medical Education (CME) to its members. This accreditation is performed by the Collège des Médecins du Québec, which evaluates all aspects such as needs assessments, financial support, delivery of the actual programs and their evaluation. The process is carried out under the guidance of the QRA's director, Dr. Anne St-Pierre. The program has been fully accredited with perfect scores in several areas. This is unprecedented and all the credit must go to Dr. St-Pierre.

Dr. Mark Hazeltine is also profoundly involved in two aspects of the Association's CME program. First, he is now organizing the 8th edition of "La Mise à Jour en Rhumatologie," the Quebec review course. Attendance is always high, a true reflection of the program's quality. Another program that was developed eight years ago and is also very successful is the Musculoskeletal (MSK) weekend for first- and second-year residents in medicine. Dr. Gilles Boire was the program's director for the past five years and Dr. Marie Hudson has taken over the position for the upcoming years. This program, plus the very high vivacity of the rheumatology community, has led to very successful recruitment in the rheumatology program of our four faculties. All the available positions have been filled at every year for the past five years. There are now 108 registered rheumatologists at the QRA, up from 74 in 2000. Unfortunately, as in every other province, a rheumatologist is very rarely a full-time clinical practicing one. We probably need 40 more.

We are also actively negotiating new services for the Quebec population. We are designing and negotiating a network of nurse assistants for all Quebec rheumatologists. We are also building service corridors between primary-care practitioners and rheumatologists. Several corridors are already in place, such as Parler with Dr. Mark Hazeltine and Passer with the Institute of Rheumatology of Montreal. An evaluation of their effectiveness is underway and, once completed, will be presented to the Ministry of Health with a request for government support. Support for ultrasonography will also be the focus of active negotiations between the Fédération des médecins spécialistes du Québec (FMSQ), Association des médecins rhumatologues du Québec (AMRQ) and the Quebec government. It is not acceptable that rheumatologists are not yet supported for such a basic and important clinical evaluation instrument in 2011 when it is now standard care in Europe.



President of the QRA, Dr. Denis Choquette.

*Denis Choquette, MD, FRCPC
Professor of Medicine, Division of Rheumatology,
Université de Montréal (UdeM)
President, Quebec Rheumatology Association (QRA)
Montreal, Quebec*