



# EDITORIAL



## Volunteer Physicians: The Real Heroes in CME

Jocelyn Lockyer, PhD

The University of Calgary is a special place in a special time. This year, the university is celebrating its 40th anniversary. There is a wonderful optimism throughout campus as new buildings go up, programs are expanded and new faculty members are hired. The Faculty of Medicine graduated its first class in 1973 with 27 students. The class of 2009 will start with 142 students. The number of residents has similarly increased to 470 residents and 70 fellows. Of course, this optimism and expansion mirrors the tremendous growth that is happening in Calgary and the rest of the province with its oil wealth.

While we take pride in growth and change at the institutional level, the contributions of many individuals often go unrecognized. In medical education, the real heroes are not those with the money to fuel growth, but those who volunteer their time. Our faculty, like others, is fortunate to have so many physicians who volunteer their time to teach and plan CME and professional development (PD) programs.

*In medical education, the real heroes are those who volunteer their time.*

I have often joked that continuing education is the obstetrics of medical education. Most courses take nine or more months from concept to delivery. They require care and attention during their gestation and close monitoring on delivery day. A thorough review after the program identifies the successes and challenges that can be used to improve future programs.

In planning and running CME programs, countless volunteer hours are required to meet the standards of accreditation established by the College of Family Physicians of Canada and the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada.

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## Editorial

These volunteer hours are achieved through:

### 1. Needs assessment completion

Physicians are regularly approached to provide data to help the planning committee better address the issues facing practitioners. The data that is collected is needed to design the programs.

### 2. Planning committee meetings

Depending on the size and complexity of a program, four to eight meetings of one hour to three hours may be needed to develop the program. The meetings will initially focus on the needs that have been identified and then will look at:

- course objectives,
- course format and teaching strategies,
- course length,
- course topics,
- speakers and their guidelines,
- course evaluation and
- the course budget and funding.

### 3. Planning committee member work

Between meetings, planning committee members will:

- talk to speakers,
- negotiate funding and
- review materials related to the course.

### 4. Teacher preparation

Most teachers will spend between three hours and 15 hours for every teaching hour reviewing the literature, as well as preparing slides and handouts.

### 5. Time spent teaching at the course

### 6. Planning committee

- Involvement at the time of the course
- Involvement at the end of the course

All of these activities add up to a considerable investment of time and little or no remuneration.

As Associate Dean, I am thankful for the opportunity to work with such wonderful professionals. They truly exemplify the expectations of Hippocrates: I will respect the hard-won scientific gains of those physicians in whose steps I walk and gladly share such knowledge as is mine with those who are to follow.<sup>1</sup>

*If you have a chance to thank the members of the planning committee and teachers at the next course you attend, do so.*

If you have a chance to thank the members of the planning committee and teachers at the next course you attend, do so. They will appreciate the recognition.

As Associate Dean, let me salute those who have helped us so generously at the University of Calgary. I hope that you will find this issue of *The Canadian Journal of CME* helpful. We have tried to provide you with a representative sample of some of the really great CME that the University of Calgary volunteers have helped us produce.

**cme**

#### Reference

1. Lasagna L: Modern version of Oath of Hippocrates. Assessed July 13, 2006 at [http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/doctors/oath\\_modern.html](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/doctors/oath_modern.html)



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