

## Report from the Human Resources Committee

By Claire Barber, MD, PhD, FRCPC; and Jessica Widdifield, PhD

The Canadian Rheumatology Association (CRA) Human Resources Committee has completed several major projects over the last year, which have helped us gain a better understanding of the issues facing the workforce.

### Publication of study on factors influencing rheumatology residents' decisions regarding future practice location:<sup>1</sup>

This study reports on the results of a rheumatology resident survey on factors influencing future practice location. The main findings were that the majority of residents plan to practice in the same province where they completed their training. There were some training gaps identified, including limited training in telehealth and travelling clinics, and few electives in smaller centres. The work highlights that further strategies need to be developed to increase exposure of rheumatology trainees to underserved areas and populations to address the regional maldistribution of rheumatologists.

### CRA Workforce and Wellness Survey Finalized:<sup>2</sup>

The workforce survey was completed in March 2021. The findings highlight an ongoing deficit of rheumatologists across Canada and high levels of burnout among Canadian rheumatologists during the pandemic. The results were presented at the American College of Rheumatology Annual Scientific Meeting, and the manuscript is presently under review for publication at the *Journal of Rheumatology*. The study will also be disseminated at the CRA Annual Scientific Meeting in 2022. The committee will look to develop strategies to address the findings of the survey in the upcoming year.

### CRA Workforce Technical Report and Position Paper Finalized:

The HR committee's workforce technical report has been finalized, and the position statement has been approved by the CRA's board. A manuscript describing this work is in preparation and the full report and a summary of the position statement will be available on the CRA's website shortly. The position statement endorses six statements including the need to:

- 1) Increase recruitment of clinical full-time equivalent rheumatologists;
- 2) Improve the regional distribution of rheumatologists across Canada;
- 3) Enhance retention of rheumatologists within the workforce;
- 4) Promote and enhance workforce capacity with interdisciplinary healthcare providers;
- 5) Promote and support research to provide data about the rheumatology workforce to plan for the future healthcare needs of Canada's population; and
- 6) Support equity, diversity and inclusion in rheumatology.

### New Committee Members and Chair:

The committee would like to thank exiting members for their service, including Drs. Jane Purvis, Janet Pope, Karen Adams, Rachel Shupak, Mark Harrison, Carter Thorne, Mark Matsos, and Jason Kur. We also wish to welcome new members including Drs. Sahil Koppikar, Ashley Sterrett, and Michelle Teo who have joined the remaining members on the committee (Drs. Michelle Batthish, Stephanie Kulhawy-Wibe, Janet Roberts, Justin Shamis, Jennifer Lee, Elaine Yacyshyn, Konstantin Jilkine, and Jennifer Burt). We are also thrilled to announce that Dr. Dana Jerome has been chosen as the new HR Committee Chair.

#### References:

1. Shamis J, Widdifield J, Batthish M, et al. Factors influencing rheumatology residents' decision on future practice location. *Can Med Ed J* 2020. <https://doi.org/10.36834/cmej.70348>.
2. Kulhawy-Wibe SC, Widdifield J, Lee JL, et al. Results from the 2020 Canadian Rheumatology Association's Workforce and Wellness Survey. *J Rheumatol* (submitted) 2021.

Claire Barber, MD, PhD, FRCPC

Associate Professor,

Departments of Medicine and Community Health Sciences,

Cumming School of Medicine,

University of Calgary, Calgary, Alberta

Jessica Widdifield, PhD

Co-chair, CRA Human Resources Committee

Scientist, Sunnybrook Research Institute, ICES

Assistant Professor, University of Toronto,

Institute of Health Policy, Management & Evaluation

Toronto, Ontario