

# The Bensen Models of Care Initiative

By Sandy Kennedy, Executive Director, Ontario Rheumatology Association

The Bensen Models of Care Initiative was established in 2018 by members of the Ontario Rheumatology Association (ORA) leadership team at that time: Dr. Arthur Karasik, Dr. Thanu Ruban, Dr. Henry Averno and Dr. Rick Adachi. Together they formed a steering committee to oversee critical aspects of the program, such as governance, sponsorship, terms of reference and regular correspondence with the ORA Executive Officers and Board of Directors. Today, the Bensen Models of Care Initiative is led by Dr. Amit Ghelani. We are thankful for the contributions of everyone involved in this project.

The Bensen Models of Care Initiative was designed to honour the memory of the late Dr. William Bensen, an exceptional rheumatologist who advocated strongly for team-based models of care. His community practice in Hamilton, Ontario, included an interprofessional allied health professional team who worked together to improve the patient experience. His advocacy work, pioneering strategies and overall legacy are promoted in this initiative.

Each year, eligible members of the ORA are invited to apply for a Bensen Models of Care Grant. Applicants are encouraged to propose an initiative that 1) promotes improved care for patients through rheumatologist-led, team-based models of care; 2) encourages novel solutions to improve access to rheumatology care; and 3) helps direct health policy toward funding of team-based models of care.

A Selection Committee is identified each year that includes an ORA Executive member, a Board of Directors

member, a Regular ORA member, an Allied Health Professional and a member of the Bensen family. Up to two successful applicants may be selected annually to receive a maximum of \$40,000. An application for a second year of funding, up to a maximum of \$20,000, will be considered, based on merit and quality of the final progress report.

Over the years, the program has received 15 excellent applications, and has allocated a total of four grants, two of which have been successfully implemented. The program was paused in 2021 due to the pandemic. The Steering Committee was excited to resurrect it in 2022, as was the ORA membership based on the high calibre of applications that were received! The 2022 recipients are Dr. Stephanie Gotthiel and Dr. Derek Haaland. We look forward to sharing the results of their projects in the future.

The ORA is proud of the Bensen Models of Care Initiative and are pleased to have found a way to honour the late Dr. William Bensen. We are especially grateful to the sponsors who enabled the project through their generous funding.

For more information on the Bensen Models of Care Initiative, please contact the ORA's Executive Director, Sandy Kennedy at [skennedy@ontariorheum.ca](mailto:skennedy@ontariorheum.ca).

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