

News from the ORA

By Felix Leung, MD, FRCPC

Greetings from the Ontario Rheumatology Association (ORA)! I was asked to reflect on the achievements of the past year, and I can say that I am truly inspired by the remarkable strides our organization has made. I am also very humbled and thankful for the hard-working ORA executive, board, committee chairs, and members. These achievements are a testament to our collective commitment to improving rheumatological care in Ontario.

Here are a few highlights:

The Annual Scientific Meeting (ASM) at Kingbridge Centre just north of Toronto this past May was a great success! This was our first fully in-person meeting since 2019. We had one of the highest registrations ever. We featured well-known speakers including Dr. Atul Deodhar, Dr. Eduardo Mysler, Dr. Georg Schett, and Dr. Cynthia Cooper. The reviews from attendees were excellent. I am looking forward to the next ASM taking place May 24-26th, 2024. This is open to all rheumatologists so please mark your calendars. Details will be available in the new year.

The Informatics Committee chaired by Dr. Tom Appleton has made exciting progress in the past year. Our new RheumView digital health solution was introduced at the May ASM to huge fanfare and is now officially launched! This intuitive interface integrates seamlessly with electronic medical records (EMRs) to organize and



present the most relevant patient data in a meaningful way. This improves office efficiency, decision-making, and ultimately, patient care. RheumView is fully designed, developed, owned, and supported by the ORA.

We have continued to build relationships with the Ontario Ministry of Health and with private payers. We are in constant communication with the government and our members regarding the biosimilar transition, which is currently happening in Ontario. A recent success: anti-CCP and ANCA testing is now publicly funded as of September 2023. We have also been working with private payers to

create unified criteria and a common application form for biologics to reduce administrative burden.

The Northern Ontario Committee chaired by Dr. Sahil Koppikar has made great strides in setting up a structure to enhance rheumatological care in this underserved area of the province. We have worked with the Ontario government to implement a model of rheumatological care in Thunder Bay, and we continue to work on identifying candidates for Advanced Clinician Practitioner in Arthritis Care (ACPAC) training in all northern hubs.

The ORA has created a Planetary Health working group, headed by Dr. Stephanie Tom. The goal is to promote eco-friendly habits by making changes in our practice. Even small changes in our office, such as using less examination table paper, can make a difference to the environment. A toolkit with rheumatology-specific recommendations has been created with workshops and town-halls being planned soon. I'm looking forward to great things from this group!

All of these events and initiatives are made possible through the hard work of our ORA leadership team and ORA members, as well as our Executive Director Sandy Kennedy, to whom I am deeply grateful.

All the best for the coming year.

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