

The CAG Liaison Committee Report: Committed to cooperation

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The Canadian Association of Gastroenterology (CAG) is committed to cooperating with all other societies and associations for the betterment of gastroenterology and health care in general. This report summarizes the activities undertaken by the Liaison Committee in the past year.

NATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Affiliations with other Canadian gastrointestinal societies

To increase communication with provincial gastrointestinal (GI) associations, the committee has contacted the head of all such associations and welcomed any comments, concerns or requests that may they have for the CAG. The Regional Representation Committee, led by Dr Michael Gould, will also include these heads as committee members. Other GI societies that already have strong ties with CAG are the Canadian Association for the Study of Liver Diseases (CASL), Canadian Digestive Health Foundation (CDHF) and Canadian Helicobacter Study Group (CHSG).

Affiliation with Canadian non-GI societies

The CAG is an affiliated society of the Canadian Medical Association (CMA) and, as such, is a member of the CMA Committee of Affiliates. This committee meets twice a year to provide input from specialty societies and associations

with respect to the setting of goals, objectives and priorities for the CMA General Council. A Liaison Committee representative was present at the January and August 2002 meetings.

Examples of initiatives discussed by the Committee of Affiliates are the CMA's Quality Health Care and Risk Management Project, physician disability issues, physician relationships with insurance and industry, physician resource issues, the Federal Commission on the Future of Health Care (Romanow Commission), the medical use of marijuana, government spending on medical equipment (the Federal Government's One Billion Dollar Medical Equipment Fund) and Quebec's Bill 114. In addition, we plan to approach this committee in order to have the CAG-approved clinical practice guidelines linked to the CMA website. The Liaison Committee has also nominated two CAG members for the CMA Medal of Honour and Medal of Service.

The CMA Committee of Affiliates also promotes liaison with other Canadian non-GI associations, including the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada (RCPS(C)), the Canadian Medical Protection Association (CMPA) and various other specialty associations because many sit on this committee.

The Liaison Committee recently participated in a meeting of the National Specialty Societies (NSS) at the

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RCPSC meeting in Ottawa. There is a call by some of the societies to create an umbrella structure to join all of the NSS together. Possible benefits are reduction in costs of travel, hotel deals and insurance, and learning from each other's experiences.

INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES

One of the long term goals of the Liaison Committee is to develop links to international societies in the United States, Europe and the rest of the world. In so doing, we wish to promote mutual areas of interest, particularly with respect to educational and research activities. This year, a new initiative was taken with the formation of the International Gastroenterology Fellows Travel Grants. Two

travel grants, of up to CDN\$3000, will be awarded to international fellows to facilitate their participation in the Gastrointestinal Resident In Training (GRIT) course held at the Canadian Digestive Disease Week (CDDW) in February 2003 in Banff, Alberta. Applicants from South or Central America, Africa or Asia will be encouraged to submit an abstract for this competition. The objectives of this initiative are to increase communications between international GI societies and the CAG, as well as to improve awareness of the activities of the CAG among promising international fellows and thereby to raise their interest in undertaking further training in Canada. The CAG Executive approved this initiative for this year with a reassessment planned in one year.



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