



CAEP | ACMU

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



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CAEP at a Crossroads

This past year has been a year like no other. Globally, nationally and within our own emergency medicine ecosystem, fundamental change is afoot, to which we must adapt. When at a crossroads without a guidepost, the temptation is always to take the well-worn path, in this case that of the status quo. That is no longer an option and CAEP has been bracing itself to forge a new way forward.

Most of our many accomplishments this past year have been overshadowed, or catalyzed, by two seminal events: the COVID-19 pandemic, and a collective, visceral response to acts of racism, leading to widespread social action, demanding respect for diversity and equity for all people.

Before expanding on those themes, it is worth noting some remarkable achievements of our organization and members, beginning with the hugely successful CAEP by the Sea Conference in Halifax 2019. Sadly, CAEP's 2020 conference had to be cancelled due to the pandemic, but we are grateful for the efforts of the Ottawa organizing committee and have been utilizing their content in our National Virtual Grand Rounds. On the subject of large conferences, I am pleased to report that CAEP was successful in its bid for the 2025 International Conference on Emergency Medicine (ICEM), which will be held in Montreal.

Over the past year, our members helped develop multiple published position papers on subjects such as point-of-care ultrasound (POCUS), Universal Pharmacare and Dental Care. Our Opioid Task Force fulfilled its mandate; their excellent work has recently been published and can be found on the CAEP website. As always, our Public Affairs Committee was remarkably active, drafting an important paper on Violence in the ED (to be published in the coming year), testifying before parliamentary committees on gun control legislation and drug shortages, and spearheading the drafting of multiple statements with the advent of the pandemic. In all, CAEP released eighteen position statements, published thirteen open access articles in CJEM and participated in over forty media events across the country related to COVID-19.

The acronym PPE was unknown to many practitioners and most Canadians prior to 2020, but COVID-19 has vaulted it into common parlance, while profoundly changing the way we practice, perhaps permanently. Emergency physicians across the country experienced an unprecedented sense of vulnerability in the early phase of the pandemic, impacting our already precarious collective wellbeing and underlining the importance of the research, advocacy and peer support undertaken by CAEP's Wellness Committee. The lessons of the past year are not new, but imbued with a new urgency: hospitals must be safer for patients and staff, free from the risks of crowding and disaster planning must be robust and proactive. We have our advocacy work cut for us in the years ahead.

Equity, diversity and inclusivity have become increasingly important to CAEP and the Board has committed to them as overarching values that will suffuse all our work in the future. We have a very active Women in EM Committee, established a 2SLGBTQIA+ Committee this past year, gave a voting seat to rural members at our Board table and issued a strong Statement on Racism, in which we articulated our commitment to do better as an organization and specialty. We are accountable to those promises and will report on tangible efforts to promote diversity as the coming year unfolds.

With traditional annual conferences no longer viable for the foreseeable future, CAEP 2021, tentatively scheduled for Winnipeg next June, is weighing on my mind. Two highlights of our proud city which we had hoped to showcase are the Canadian Museum of Human Rights and the new Diversity Gardens. The Gardens aspire to showcase biological diversity and harmony, linking them with their equivalents in our human world. The juxtaposition of racial disharmony on a viral pandemic is a stark illustration of the elusiveness of those goals, but emergency physicians have much to offer, as front-line healers, specialists, teachers, researchers and advocates. We have much to be proud of as we look back on the year past, but the challenges ahead are almost overwhelming. We can start by choosing the road less traveled.

As my term comes to a close, I want to express my gratitude to our incredibly talented and committed membership and staff.

I hope you find peace and joy in these turbulent times, in your personal lives but also within the CAEP family, and ardently hope for a better year ahead, in which we can all gather closely, and safely, together.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'A Chochinov'.

Aleks Chochinov MD FRCPC

CAEP President 2018-2020