



## Greetings Members and Partners,



With the flurry of activity that occurs prior to the summer lull I have been quite late in sitting down to write this newsletter- but I figure as long as it is out before summer solstice, then it is still Spring! It has been a hectic spring, with lots of good work being accomplished. Some of the highlights, which you will see below include: the release of the “First Nations, Inuit, Metis Health Core Competencies;” a series of very successful presentations at the 2008 Canadian Conference on Medical Education; and, the successful trial of the web-based discussion boards.

Additionally, I have attended a number of meetings on IPAC’s behalf, a description of which I will share below. The requests for our participation in diverse areas reflect the growing recognition of IPAC as

a leading organization in Indigenous health with specialized knowledge to contribute.

I am pleased to confirm that the 5th annual meeting of the Indigenous Physicians Association of Canada will occur in Montreal and the nearby First Nations community of Kahnawake on August 15-17th. Please see below for more details on the planned agenda, including the 5k run/ walk which will take place Saturday morning in Kahnawake. It will be a great opportunity to be in the community, meet some of the residents, role model both healthy living, and promote the medical profession. I hope you will all come out and participate.

In peace,

**Marcia Anderson, MD MPH FRCPC**  
*President*

Indigenous Physicians Association of Canada

Greetings .....1

President’s  
Report .....2

IPAC-AFMC  
Project  
Updates .....3

National Mentorship  
Forum .....3

First Nations, Inuit  
and Métis Health  
Human Resources  
Inventory .....3

IPAC-RCPSC  
Project .....4

Website Update:  
.....4

Membership Fee  
Update .....4

# Indigenous Physicians Association of Canada

## President's Report

In previous editions of the newsletter I have not had a separate section for my activities, but I've attended a few meetings that may be of interest to our membership and that as an organization we will need to decide on our role in each area.

In January I attended a National Symposium on Health Literacy, hosted by the National Collaborating Center for Determinants of Health and the Canadian Public Health Association. Other Indigenous participants included a representative from the National Aboriginal Health Organization and a representative from the Aboriginal Initiatives committee of the Society of Obstetrics and Gynecology of Canada. There are a variety of definitions of health literacy, including this one from the World Health Organization:

“the cognitive and social skills which determine the motivation and ability of individuals to gain access to, understand, and use information in ways which promote and maintain good health; it implies the achievement of a level of knowledge, personal skills and confidence to take action to improve personal and community health by changing personal lifestyles and living conditions.”

During the symposium we changed their proposed format a little to include a table discussion specifically on First Nations, Inuit and Metis considerations of a Pan-Canadian Health Literacy Strategy. Unfortunately, the outcomes document that resulted from the meeting did not reflect the richness of the discussion our table had, nor the strategies that we suggested. You can find the reports at the following link:  
<http://www.cpha.ca/en/portals/h-l.aspx>. Aside from the release of the reports I am not aware of any further follow-up to the recommendations that came forth.

In February I returned to Ottawa for a meeting that, in my perspective, is not unrelated to the concept of health literacy. This meeting was hosted by the National Collaborating Center for Aboriginal Health (NCCAHA), and was a forum on Indigenous Social Determinants of Health. Participant organizations were national Aboriginal organizations from diverse sectors including health, housing, education, and economic development. The World Health Organization has a Commission on Social Determinants of Health, with part of the commission being focused on Indigenous Social Determinants of Health (SDOH). Canada's contribution to this process has been led by the NCCAHA (part of the Public Health Agency of Canada), Health Canada, and First Nations and Inuit Health, with those agencies seeking input from various Aboriginal organizations. Multiple international meetings have been held, including one in Adelaide, Australia, and an upcoming one in Quito, Ecuador.

The purpose of the forum was to provide input to the NCCAHA on how our organizations work in the area of SDOH and how the NCCAHA can lead collaboration in this field. Again, a report and a DVD of the meeting proceedings are being developed, and I am not sure how things will proceed. Given the importance of the SDOH to the achievement of IPAC's vision this may be an area where we want to proactively seek more involvement. For more information on the WHO's Commission on the Social Determinants of Health please refer to the following link: [http://www.who.int/social\\_determinants/en/](http://www.who.int/social_determinants/en/).

Since I don't believe an exhaustive list of my meetings make a great read, I will end there. Perhaps in the future I can post updates on some of the meetings I attend on the discussion boards, so that our members are aware of the work as it happens.

## IPAC-AFMC Project Updates

The curriculum and recruitment/ retention projects remain very active. In the summer newsletter more details will be provided on the April curriculum meeting held in April. For this newsletter, we wish to draw your attention to the numerous documents that have been recently released as part of these projects. We invite you to download them from the IPAC website ([www.ipac-amic.org](http://www.ipac-amic.org)) and review them.

- First Nations, Inuit, Metis Health Core Competencies: A Curriculum Framework for Undergraduate Medical Education
- IPAC-AFMC Pre-Admissions Support Toolkit for First Nations, Inuit, Metis Students into Medicine
- Summary of Admissions and Support Programs for Indigenous Students at Canadian Faculties of Medicine
- Best Practices to Recruit Mature Aboriginal Students to Medicine

On behalf of IPAC I congratulate and thank all those who contributed to the development and writing of these documents.

I also wish to congratulate those who participated in presentations at the Canadian Conference on Medical Education. In partnership with the AFMC we hosted two sessions. In the session entitled "Using an Aboriginal Health Lens to Increase Cultural Competency" the monologue "Unpacking the Backpack" was presented to the workshop participants. This was used to illustrate how the Core Competencies might be taught, in addition to being a valuable teaching opportunity for the many people present. In the session entitled "Creating Best Practices in Recruitment and Retention of International and Canadian Perspectives" guest speakers from James Cook University in Australia (Jacinta Elston) and the Indians into Medicine (INMED) program at the University of North Dakota (Eugene Delorme) presented their respective experiences. This was followed by a panel of current Indigenous medical students who talked about their journeys into and through medical school, including both the challenges and the opportunities. The student presentations were very well-received, and high-lighted some key messages around the need for peer support, mentoring, and financial support.

## National Mentorship Forum

In the future you may hear us refer to the AGA as the National Mentorship Forum. The reason for this is that many people consider the AGA only the half-day business meeting that occurs on Sunday morning, and we don't feel that this adequately captures the extent of what occurs, and what benefits we all receive, from the entire weekend. This years National Mentorship Forum will take place in Montreal and Kahnawake. A preliminary agenda is provided below and details regarding registration and arrangements will soon follow.

### Thursday, August 14

	Student Arrivals to Montreal
	Hotel Check in
6:30-8:00	Meet and Greet
8:00 -	Student social event

### Friday Morning, August 15

8:00 - 8:30	Continental Breakfast
8:30 - 9:00	Welcome and introductions and outline of day
9:00 - 12:00	Presentations, group discussions and coffee break
12:00-1:00	Lunch
1:00-3:30	Presentations
3:30-4:30	Student Meeting

### Friday Evening, August 15

3:00-7:00	Physicians arrival to Montreal, Hotel Check
6:00 - 9:00	Dinner

### Saturday, August 16

8:00 - 8:30	Continental Breakfast
8:30 - 9:00	Welcome and introductions and outline of day
9:00 - 12:00	Transportation to Kahnawake 5 km walk/run
12:00 - 1:30	Lunch
1:30-5:00	Presentations
7:00- 10.00	Social evening

### Sunday Morning, August 17

8:30 - 9:00	Continental Breakfast
9:00 - 12:00	Annual General Meeting
12:00-1:00	Lunch

## IPAC-RCPSC Project

At the end of March a meeting of the Project Advisory Committee was held in Ottawa. Priority areas for the development of curriculum modules at the postgraduate and continuing medical education levels were discussed, with finalization yet to occur. The working groups have been set, including the co-chairs of these groups, and their initial meetings will occur in August. Further details will be provided in the summer newsletter.

## Website Update

As mentioned above, multiple publications have been added to the website for review. In addition, the discussion boards are up and running, and we hope that the members will use them actively! Instructions on how to log on and use them can be obtained from the Executive Director, Kandice Leonard.

## Membership Fee Update

After careful consideration the Board of Directors has decided to increase the membership fees, and you will find the new fee amounts reflected on the 2008-09 membership forms. There are multiple reasons for increasing our fees, including:

- Increased services to IPAC members including the National Mentorship Forum with no registration fee, and supported travel for student/resident members;
- Ongoing website maintenance costs;
- Very low baseline fees relative to other organizations;
- Increased infrastructure/ staff costs given the growth of the organization; and,
- Relatively small organizational budget with little room for items such as gifts and honoraria.

For those who are interested in seeing how are expenditures break down, an audited financial report covering the first 3 years of operations is available from Kandice Leonard. An audited financial report for the last fiscal year will also be presented at the Annual General Assembly in Montreal.

## Please Contact us at:



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**Improving Indigenous Health Status  
to the Highest Attainable Level.**