



## NEWSLETTER FROM THE CNSS RESIDENT REPRESENTATIVE

January 15, 2010

Dear Colleagues,

Happy new year to you all! I hope all of you have a prosperous 2010!

It has been my pleasure and privilege to serve as your national resident representative to the executive of the Canadian Neurological Sciences Federation (CNSF) and the Canadian Neurosurgical Society (CNSS) over the past 6 months. As you will see, we have been busy with a number of initiatives for which I would like to provide you with an update.

### **CNSF and CNSS Membership**

It is that time again to renew your membership in the CNSF and CNSS. As many of you know, our professional organizations provide immeasurable support for professional development and resident education. We have increased our scope this year, and as you will see, we have undertaken some key initiatives to directly educate residents on specific subspecialty topics within neurosurgery, as well as to better understand current resource allocation issues within neurosurgery in Canada. We have recently updated the fellowships database at our website ([www.cnsfederation.org](http://www.cnsfederation.org)) to provide residents with centralized access to opportunities across North America. Ongoing electronic continuing professional development initiatives will hopefully provide the chance for you to share knowledge with your peers nationwide.

The CNSF annual congress, held each year in June, is also a wonderful opportunity for all of you to network with your colleagues across the country. This year's meeting, to be held in Quebec City from June 8-11, promises to be an academically and socially fruitful event. Membership in the CNSF entitles junior members to discounted registration at the Congress, as well as a subscription to the Canadian Journal of Neurological Sciences, a chance for many of you to share work amongst your colleagues. Membership for first year residents is FREE, and nominal afterwards.

I personally invite all of you to become members of the CNSF and the CNSS. If you have not received information on membership dues or require further application information, please don't hesitate to contact me. I'll be happy to point you in the right direction.

### **Resident Review Course on Neurovascular Surgery**

As a resident body, we recently identified the need to hold topically focused, resident-driven review courses at the annual CNSF Congress. My predecessor, Greg Hawryluk, presented this notion to the Board at our last annual meeting in Halifax. With the support of CNSF leadership, we have developed the inaugural resident review course. This year's annual CNSF Congress will be held alongside the Canadian Stroke Network annual meeting and therefore, we have chosen neurovascular surgery as this year's theme. I sincerely hope that this will be the first of many rotating courses that we hold at the Congress each year.

The course is scheduled for **Tuesday, June 8**. Dr. Max Findlay from the University of Alberta has kindly agreed to co-chair this course with me, and we will interactively cover the most important topics in neurovascular surgery. At the end of the day, we will discuss clinical cases in mock scenarios. For those residents taking their Royal College certification exams, this course will be a timely review of neurovascular surgery. We have assembled an impressive cadre of speakers from across Canada, many of whom have recently graduated from neurosurgery training programs and have intimate knowledge of contemporary neurosurgery and the certification exams. Stay tuned for further details on this course; the preliminary program for the 2010 CNSF annual Congress will be available soon.

Thanks to Drs. Michael Hill and Loch Macdonald, for supporting the development of this course through the Scientific Program Committee. Special thanks to Dr. Max Findlay for helping me design the course. I hope to see all of you there on **June 8**. Please send me any questions that you may have about this new and exciting initiative.



**The CNSF Annual Congress: June 8-11, 2010 in Quebec City**

The annual Congress of the CNSF always is a fun time for residents. It's a great place to showcase your academics for the year to your Canadian colleagues, as well as socialize with friends new and old. This year's Congress in Quebec City will be no different!

**The abstract deadline has been extended to January 22, 2010** and so I encourage all of you to submit abstracts and be part of this wonderful experience!

**Canadian Neurosurgery Resource Allocation and Manpower Issues**

Finally, it is no secret that the perceived lack of job availability in Canada for graduates of Canadian neurosurgery programs continues to create great anxiety. The impact of changes in board eligibility in the United States of America remains debated and we will continue to follow this closely. I met with a small group of senior Canadian neurosurgery residents at our business meeting in Halifax. From that discussion, it became very clear that limitations on board eligibility in the US was not the most important issue in their minds, but rather they were more interested in Canadian opportunities and what major obstacles exist to obtaining neurosurgical employment in this country. We agreed in principle to embark on a fact-finding mission in each province to better understand the current state of neurosurgery resource allocation and its impact on potential employment for graduating residents.

As your national resident representative to the CNSS, I will be spearheading an effort over the next few months to better understand this issue. A few weeks ago, I met with Dr. James Rutka, Chairman of the University

of Toronto Division of Neurosurgery, to discuss this problem further and understand the current state of affairs in Ontario. Dr. Rutka has chaired a province-wide expert panel that recommended increasing the neurosurgical workforce in Ontario by several more surgeons, along with ancillary services to support the provision of neurosurgical care. Dr. Rutka has pledged his support to our efforts as a resident body to further advocate for neurosurgical employment opportunities in Canada.

To this end, I shall be contacting some of you to help with this important endeavour in your respective provinces. There are many published reports on this topic, and we shall be looking at some of these to help us. I hope that we shall also be able to approach contacts at the provincial ministries of health to provide more information. In Ontario, I will be following up further with Dr. Rutka and through him, the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. Finally, I will approach Dr. Derek Fewer, coordinator of the last manpower survey, to repeat the survey to obtain updated information.

Finally, we will continue to follow developments in the United States with regards to board eligibility. I met briefly in December with Dr. Daniel Barrow, current secretary of the American Board of Neurological Surgery. Current changes to health care delivery and compensation structures in the United States complicated our discussion, however I plan to follow up with him soon to find out more information on the state of neurosurgical manpower in their country. Many of you are aware that Dr. Rutka will be assuming the Presidency of the American Association of Neurological Surgeons in May, and he has pledged his full support to us during his term as AANS President. Similarly, Dr. Max Findlay, President of the CNSS continues to work diligently on our behalf.

We certainly have a busy and exciting year ahead, and I sincerely hope that all of you will avail yourselves of the many opportunities that the CNSF and CNSS provide. I hope to see all of you at this year's annual Congress in Quebec City to be held from June 8-11.

As your resident representative, I am available always to answer any questions or concerns you may have. Feel free to email me anytime at [brainsurgeon@rogers.com](mailto:brainsurgeon@rogers.com).

Yours sincerely,

Shobhan Vachhrajani, MD  
National Resident Representative,  
Canadian Neurosurgical Society.