

## The different faces of your association's councils and committees

The BCMA's mission statement says that we will strive to "promote a social, economic, and political climate in which members can provide the citizens of British Columbia with the highest standard of health care while achieving maximum professional satisfaction and fair economic reward." At any given time, there are hundreds of BCMA members from around the province involved in the association's activities through their participation on more than 70 educational, medical, and policy development committees, councils, and working groups. Participating physician members volunteer their valuable time working toward a common goal, often in collaboration with other health care stakeholders.

Three committees, in particular, play a significant role in furthering the objectives of the mission statement. The Council on Health Promotion (COHP), the Council on Health Economics and Policy (CHEP), and the Council on Public Affairs and Communications (CPAC) develop position

papers and work on project-oriented public campaigns in order to help shape public policy in areas of public health, health promotion, health economics, and health policy. These three councils have the largest number of physician volunteers and are considered the "public face" of the BCMA.

For almost 40 years, the Council on Health Promotion has been the BCMA's primary vehicle for public health advocacy. COHP has nine sub-committees, each committed to research and advocacy in a specific area of public health or health promotion. Successful past promotional activities—such as lobbying for a provincial dementia strategy, influencing air and water quality legislation, advocating for mandatory helmet use by cyclists, and promoting mandatory use of car seats for babies and children—have all originated with COHP. The current COHP project, Eat Well, Play Well, Stay Well, has been successful at educating parents around the province on healthy, active living to prevent and reduce childhood obesity.

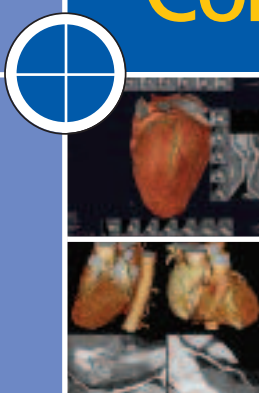

COHP will continue to develop and advocate new health promotion initiatives to improve the lives of British Columbians.

The Council on Health Economics and Policy's contribution to the BCMA's mission is to coordinate development of the association's policy positions on issues relating to health care funding, physician resource planning, health care delivery models, and payment options. Project-oriented working groups develop position papers annually. The position papers are presented to government, stakeholders, and the public to make them aware, get them talking, and then taking action. Recent influential publications include *Turning the Tide* (2000, 2001), *Ensuring Excellence: Renewing BC's Primary Care System* (2002), *Getting IT Right: Patient Centred Information Technology* (2004), *Specialty Care in BC: A System in Distress* (2004), and *Working Together: Enhancing Multidisciplinary Care in BC* (2005). CHEP will be releasing its

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## comment

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position paper on wait lists in the summer of 2006. These positions have helped and are continuing to help shape health policy in BC.

The primary role of the Council on Public Affairs and Communications is to facilitate and support government relations activities on behalf of the BCMA, as well as monitor political and health care issues at regional and provincial levels. The major vehicle for CPAC is the influential MD/MLA Contact Program that matches a local physician with each MLA in the province so that elected representatives can have a knowledgeable contact with whom to discuss health care issues. Topics of discussion can range from patient care, to legislative changes, to negotiations.

There are many stand-alone committees within the BCMA, as well as

those that include members of government, health regions, and academics, that deal with topics as diverse as archives, CMPA rebate, patterns of practice, physician health, pharmacy and therapeutics, and rural issues. The complete list of current committees and sub-committees is listed in the members' section of the BCMA web site.

Consider getting involved. You can invest as much or as little time as you choose in a committee that interests you. More information and who to contact on these committees can be found on the BCMA's web site at [www.bcma.org](http://www.bcma.org). I hope you will consider working with others toward a common goal that is of interest to you—you will find it worthwhile, rewarding, and an opportunity to interact collegially with other physicians.

—Michael Golbey, MD  
BCMA President

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