

## Reflections on a year

With the 2008 Annual General Meeting rapidly approaching, one naturally reflects back over the past year, which has slipped by amazingly quickly. One year ago, I spoke of three themes important to my presidency: physician unity, government relations, and medical students' issues.

Physician unity has been put to the test by the problems surrounding allocation. The review of the allocation process will begin soon. To avoid the problems that have arisen under the present structures and processes I am certain that significant change will be recommended. By the time of the AGM the report from the review of the last negotiations will have been released.

On another aspect of unity, during my tour of various communities to discuss the proposal for the new governance structure, I was impressed by the common desire from GPs and specialists alike for more input into the association. If the referendum passes this will become reality, but even if it fails we should continue to explore others ways of achieving that common goal.

As a result of our new master agreement we now find ourselves in an era of increased involvement with government over issues other than strictly remuneration. The new joint committees have begun their work and promise to be effective in helping to make the health care system work better for our patients, physicians, and government. Tension will always permeate, especially in times of scarce human resources across the health care spectrum, but hopefully reasonable solutions can be found before brush fires ignite. Although there is some optimism that a better relationship is developing, I have been con-

cerned that our profession is sometimes left in the dark on major issues such as scope of practice. We must have the opportunity to engage with government on legislation that could significantly affect our practices. We will again have to remind government that our cooperation is essential if changes are to be successful.

A key reason for holding this year's AGM in Prince George is this June sees the graduation of the first class of medical school students from the Northern Medical Program. Along with other smaller communities in the north, my home town of Terrace will see up to four third-year medical students. Beginning this August, they will spend the year doing their integrated medical clerkships. We also look forward to our first family prac-

tice residents next year. This will be both a challenge and an opportunity for Terrace's physicians. It has been a pleasure to have had the opportunity to meet so many students and residents over the year and to see the program *Medicine Beyond Medicine* continue and welcomed by the students.

This is my last Comment column for the *BCMJ*. Writing a column well in advance of publication is always a challenge, especially when one knows that significant developments may occur in the interim. My apologies to the editorial staff for being chronically late in submitting these articles. Hopefully my successor, Dr Bill Mackie, will be more timely!

—**Geoffrey Appleton, MB**  
**BCMA President**