

nology, Neurology, and Rheumatology had already become independent sections before Internal Medicine's umbrella group fully disbanded—and since that time a few more sections have joined the ranks.

The Section of the Public Health Physicians is the newest section and is presided by Dr Réka Gustafson. This specialty deals with populations or groups rather than with individuals, and “much work remains, particularly in the context of continuing public health threats such as an aging population, the epidemic of chronic disease, preparing and responding to disasters and emergencies, and emerging infectious diseases.”¹

Nothing captures the exponential growth in medical procedures, services, and their related fees quite like the fee guide. It was not until the 1950s that the then BCMA had a province-

wide fee scale for fee-for-service physicians. When comparing today's *Doctors of BC Guide to Fees* to a 1950s version with a one-page wee index,² the differences are glaring. It's like comparing a tome to a booklet: 679 versus 53 pages and 4952 versus 1415 fee items. Physicians' fees have changed in the last half century too. The fee to perform an appendectomy for a perforated appendix was \$150 in 1957, while today's fee is \$495.

In 2013–2014 Doctors of BC hosted five successful events for section heads and representatives to ensure ongoing engagement and build relationships with sections. These events included the Audit and Billing Seminar, Negotiations Workshop, Special Services Committee Work Plan Seminar, Privileging Information Seminar, and, most recently, the Negotiations Update.

The history of specialty sections mirrors the rise and advancement of modern health care in BC. As the medical field continues to evolve, there will certainly be more sections in the future related to new technologies and discoveries as yet unknown.

References

1. Loh LC, Harvey BJ. A look to the past as we look ahead: The specialty of public health medicine in Canada. *Can J Public Health* 2013;104:e108-e110.
2. Canadian Medical Association, British Columbia Division. Minimum schedule of fees. 16 September 1957.

Dr Réka Gustafson, chair of the newly formed Public Health Physician Section of Doctors of BC, is featured in this issue's Proust questionnaire on page 46.

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The PsychiatryOnline package contains American Psychiatric Association guidelines and four e-journals,

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—Niki Baumann, Librarian

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