

CARO President's Message – February 2011



“For every complex problem there is an answer that is clear, simple, and wrong”

H.L. Mencken (1880-1956)

Manpower forecasting

In December 2010 the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons convened a meeting of national specialty society presidents on health human resources. I must say that some of the discussions at this meeting brought the above quotation to mind. Manpower planning for physicians is an extremely complex endeavor for which there are multiple stakeholders amongst professionals, healthcare organizations, universities, and government. Radiation oncology manpower forecasting does indeed have a

Canadian bibliography associated with it.^{1,2} I feel proud that CARO's contribution to surveying the radiation oncology manpower scene in Canada has been fairly consistent over a number of years, through successive chairs of the Manpower and Standards Committee. You may be interested to know that Drs. Michael Brundage and Teri Stuckless have recently submitted a manuscript for publication based upon a robust model generated from CARO survey data over the past decade from centres like your own.

Many members of our society have been of the opinion that CARO itself should lead the dialogue on how best to avoid boom and bust cycles of radiation oncologists supply in Canada. Dr. Brundage's Manpower Committee report at the last Annual General Meeting highlighted the need to ensure that decisions regarding numbers of residents entering training positions remain well informed by regional, provincial and national trends. I cannot emphasize how strongly the Board feels that bright young Canadian medical students considering a career in radiation oncology should have every expectation of sound job prospects within Canada. I am pleased to say that a very productive dialogue has occurred between the Manpower and Standards Committee and the Program Directors' Committee, ably chaired by Dr. Theresa Trotter. It is also my understanding that a number of training programs have decided to institute a voluntary, temporary cut-back on the number of radiation oncology positions to be filled through CaRMS, and to resist requests for transfer into radiation oncology programs from other disciplines for the near future. The Board is encouraged that these proactive steps will begin to influence a better balance of supply and demand for radiation oncologists over the next 10-20 years in Canada.

New web advertising policy

The Board encourages department heads across the country to advertise any and all job opportunities for graduating residents on the CARO website. You may have noticed that

CARO has taken the step of charging nominal fees for advertisements, similar to other specialty societies. These charges are to ensure the financial sustainability of our website and hopefully should not dissuade any department or organization from posting their job opportunities.

Don't forget membership renewal for 2011

You will soon see some enhancements to the online renewal process during our CARO 2011 membership drive. In addition, it will be possible this year to make an online donation to the Canadian Radiation Oncology Foundation, our charitable sister organization. I am delighted to see that CROF has renewed its partnership with sanofi-aventis for the CASARIA program, funding pilot research grants for CARO members in rectal and prostate cancer. In addition, plans are underway for CROF to develop a major public education initiative for radiation oncology in Canada, supported by another industrial partner with whom we are currently in the process of approaching.

Twenty-fifth CARO ASM – save the dates!

Lastly, it is not too early to mark off the dates of September 14-17, 2011 for the 25th CARO ASM in Winnipeg, Manitoba. Having personally attended the inaugural CARO meeting held in conjunction with the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons Annual Meeting in Winnipeg in 1987 – yes, I was a resident that long ago – I know that many members of our Association are looking forward to the chance to catch up with old friends and colleagues who have helped make CARO the dynamic organization it has developed into over the years. Dr. Luis Souhami will give the Gordon Richards Lecture and Dr. Laurie Gaspar (a Canadian by training) has been selected as the CARO Lecture. I hope to see as many of you there as possible!

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Parliament', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Matthew Parliament MD FRCPC
President, CARO

References

1. Kamra J. Worried residents watch and wait. CMAJ. 1997, 157:253.
2. Pearcey RG et al. Burgeoning career opportunities in Radiation Oncology. CMAJ. 2001, 165:886.