President's Report

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President, The Canadian Association of Gastroenterology

En français voir page 133

After an initial year of consolidating changes that had occurred over the past few years with respect to the organization of the Canadian Association of Gastroenterology (CAG), it was very gratifying to spend the second year of my term focused on the introduction of new policies and new initiatives. Some of these initiatives have been many years in the making and have involved a tremendous amount of work by my predecessors and other members of the CAG Executive, and of CAG working committees. I am very grateful to all of these individuals for their dedication and the many hours that they have selfishly devoted to our association.

One of my priorities when I took office was to restructure the financial operation of our association. With the assistance of Paul Sinclair, our executive director, we undertook a complete change in the mechanisms for raising the necessary funds to operate the CAG, and particularly the Canadian Digestive Diseases Week (CDDW). These changes were made in consultation with our industry partners – our largest source of financial support. As reported previously in the CAG News Page, we now have 12 Corporate Sponsors signed on, giving the CAG a solid foundation of financial resources on which to plan strategi-

cally for the future. Financing of the CDDW has always been heavily dependent upon funding from industry. Obviously, an industrial partner would like a return on their investment, so they would prefer there to be elements of our scientific program that are, at least to some extent, in line with the clinical areas in which they have products. On the other hand, it is critical that the content of our scientific program be driven by our members' needs, in terms of education. The institution of 'sponsored symposia' at the 2001 CDDW was an attempt to meet the needs of both the CAG and its industrial sponsors, and has been a great success that will be continued at this year's CDDW. The topics for symposia are selected based on the needs analysis performed at CDDW 2001. Potential sponsors can view the list of topics selected by our members and determine whether they are interested in being co-sponsors of the symposium with the CAG. The result has been a program that more closely reflects our members' needs and much better attendance at the industry-sponsored symposia (ergo, a better 'return-on-investment' for the sponsor).

Another major accomplishment of the past year is the approval granted to the CAG to be the supplier of continuing medical education to Canadian gastroenterologists.

The CAG is proud to acknowledge its Benefactor Corporate Sponsors:

Abbott Laboratories Ltd.

AstraZeneca Canada Inc.

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Dr Des Leddin and Paul Sinclair are responsible for having assembled the successful application to the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada, which received rave reviews.

The Canadian Digestive Health Foundation (CDHF) is now fully functional. Sandra Daniels has been hired to work both in the CAG National Office and for the CDHF. The CDHF now occupies office space in the same building as the CAG National Office, allowing for sharing of resources and for seamless information transfer. In the coming years, funding programs for public education and training will become the responsibility of the CDHF, with the CAG focusing on professional education.

The Web site has also been a major focus of the past year. As many members will have noticed, electronic submission of abstracts was available for this year's CDDW meeting.

Increasingly over the next year, you will find components of the *CAG Interactive Lecture Series* available on the Web for you to view at your convenience. Tracking of your continuing medical education credits on the CAG Web site will also be available in the near future.

At the upcoming World Congress of Gastroenterology in Bangkok, Canada will almost certainly have been approved as the host for the 2005 World Congress of Gastroenterology. This will be a tremendous opportunity for CAG members, and Canada itself, to be showcased to the world. Dr Richard Fedorak and his team are to be congratulated for the outstanding job they have done on preparing a superb bid.

In summary, it has been my honour to serve as the 38th President of the CAG. It has been a pleasure to serve with so many talented, imaginative and thoughtful people over the past two years.