

## Current challenges for the Canadian Thoracic Society

I started writing while at home convalescing from pneumonia. This was an interesting way to start my year as President of the Canadian Thoracic Society (CTS). I decided that I would like to discuss the challenges that are facing the Canadian Thoracic Society, which I realize is not at all original because every new president seems to do this.

Over the past year, I have represented the CTS at some national meetings. We have some interesting challenges, because we are a small group compared with other national specialty societies. Our membership includes individuals who have developed an interest in lung disease or the basic science of respiration by many different routes. The CTS, therefore, has to be active in many arenas. Areas of interest to members of the CTS include clinical respiratory (academic and community), research (clinical and basic), public health, epidemiology and pediatrics. Issues of standards, lack of resources and relationships with national medical organizations, international thoracic societies, charitable organizations, governments or government agencies are important for everyone. Being actively involved in all of these areas would be difficult for the CTS without help from the members.

We would like to survey our membership to decide how we can make the CTS more relevant for Canadian respirologists and researchers. You will be receiving this survey with our next mailing in the new year. It is important that the Board understands the views of members of the CTS, and it encourages you to return the survey. We need your ideas to help us steer the CTS in the right direction. We will also be investigating ways to encourage more respirologists to belong to the national organization in addition to their provincial organization. The CTS needs to be seen as responsive to the needs of respirologists and researchers in Canada.

Another challenging area is that of communication. We need to have a better communication system so that members are aware of current issues affecting the CTS or respirologists and can contribute their ideas about current events. Short e-mails may be the easiest and most cost effective. We are trying to improve our Web site so that the information is current. The



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technology is easy, but someone has to be available to make the changes. Salary costs are, therefore, likely to increase. As a small organization, we are working on a shoestring budget. We may need to increase the membership dues if the CTS becomes more active. No one likes to pay more money without receiving more value in return.

There are limits to how much a small society can do. We need to set priorities. The major challenge currently facing the CTS is to make the CTS more relevant to all members. We need to improve communication both from the CTS to the members and from the members to the CTS. Please return the survey when you receive it in the new year. Meanwhile, we encourage you to communicate with our office if you have any suggestions. We need your input!

I would like to conclude by thanking Dr Irvin Mayers for all of the hard work and effort he put in over the past year as President. Despite all of the challenges just discussed, the CTS has achieved much over the past year under his leadership.



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