CMA president-elect puts patients first

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Canadian physicians must be the “authoritative voice” that speaks for patients, says the Canadian Medical Association’s (CMA’s) President-elect Dr. Anne Doig.

“Moreover, our voices must be loudest for those who cannot speak for themselves: our poor, our children and our elderly,” Doig told delegates to the CMA’s 141st annual general council. She said patient advocacy will be among her top priorities when she assumes the presidency of CMA in August 2009.

Throughout her career, the Saskatchewan family physician, has held fast to her belief that the most important people in Canada’s health care system are the patients. This belief is what motivated her to become involved in medical politics.

“As a practising family physician for the past 30 years, I am committed above all to the ethical principle of putting patients first,” she told delegates. “This commitment to patients drives my interest and involvement in organized medical representation.”

Another priority, Doig said, will be to

ensure Canada’s health care system remains viable in an age of ballooning health budgets. This responsibility, she claimed, does not fall only to the government. “Physicians must lead the changes necessary to sustain our publicly funded health care system. One thing is unequivocal: the status quo is not sustainable.”

Doig beat six other Saskatchewan physicians in the race to be the province’s nominee as president-elect of the CMA. No other nominations were put forth at the general council, where she was confirmed as president-elect. She will take over the top job from incoming president Dr. Robert Ouellet at the 2009 general council in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.

A graduate of the University of Saskatchewan, Doig has held various positions within the Saskatchewan Medical Association and has been the chair of the CMA’s Committee on Bylaws. Her father, Dr. Noel Doig, is a past chair of the CMA’s Committee on Ethics.

Doig is also a medical advisor to the Screening and Early Detection Division of the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency, a

board member of the Saskatchewan Blue Cross, and teaches in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at the University of Saskatchewan. The Association of Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology awarded her an Excellence in Teaching award in 1996.

Outside of work, Doig competes as a Masters swimmer and serves as a swimming official and president of Swim Saskatchewan Incorporated. She and her husband, Bob Cowan, an engineer, have five sons and a daughter. The couple also run a grain farm that has been in the family for more than a century.

Other delegates voted or appointed to CMA positions at the general council include: Dr. Michael Golbey of Kelowna, British Columbia, who was elected as chair of the board of directors; Dr. David Bach of London, Ontario, who was elected as honorary treasurer; and Dr. Blake Woodside of North York, Ontario, who was appointed deputy speaker of general council. — Roger Collier, *CMAJ*

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