

Acting CMAJ editor appointed

Dr. Noni MacDonald was appointed acting editor-in-chief Mar. 7 by the journal's owners, Canadian Medical Association Holdings (CMAH) and the CMA. Her appointment comes two weeks after CMAJ's editor-in-chief and senior deputy editor were asked to leave the journal.

Dr. John Hoey, CMAJ's editor-in-chief for nearly 10 years, and Anne Marie Todkill, an editor for 11 years, left the journal Feb. 20. In a statement on Feb. 24, the president of CMA Media Inc., Graham Morris, stated that "it was time for a fresh approach." CMAJ employees cannot publicly comment because they had to sign statements of nondisclosure as a condition of employment.

Deputy Editor Dr. Stephen Choi served less than a week as acting editor-in-chief before resigning Feb. 28. "Following the dismissal of [Hoey] and [Todkill] it became apparent to me that for professional and personal reasons it was impossible for me to continue working at the journal," he said. Editorial fellow Dr. Sally Murray also resigned that day, and Associate Editor, Dr. Anita Palepu resigned Mar. 7.

On Mar. 7 it was announced that MacDonald, a current member of the CMAJ Journal Oversight Committee, the former dean of medicine at Dalhousie University and founding editor of *Paediatrics & Child Health*, would be acting editor-in-chief. Assisting her will be Editor Emeritus Dr. Bruce Squires, who was CMAJ's editor-in-chief for the 9 years preceding Hoey.

"We are very pleased that we've been able to find 2 highly respected editors to move the journal forward over the next few months until we find an editor," said CMA President Dr. Ruth Collins-Nakai.

Also on Mar. 7, CMA and CMAH announced that the Rt. Honourable Antonio Lamer, a former Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Canada, will head a Governance Review Panel that will study the relationship between CMAJ and CMA and develop principles to govern that relationship. The journal's Ombudsman-Ethicist, Dr. John Dossetor, will be vice-chair of the panel, which will report back

within 90 days of its first meeting.

With the announcements, CMA and CMAH also released a 9-point interim governance plan for the journal.

The CMAJ Editorial Board has protested some of these changes.

"As an editorial board we are concerned about the scientific integrity of the journal, and we are worried that the 6 changes announced yesterday to the governance principles are all contrary to editorial independence," said CMAJ board member Dr. Donald Redelmeier.

Collins-Nakai said the panel process will be "transparent and fair." She added: "We've asked for input from the editorial board and CMAJ staff on the make-up of the panel and even the governing principles." — Barbara Sibbald, CMAJ

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News @ a glance

First president: Peter Nicholson, who holds a doctorate in physics, is the inaugural president of the Canadian Academies of Science. Nicholson has extensive experience in both science and government, most recently as deputy chief of staff for policy in the Prime Minister's Office. A member of the Order of Canada, Nicholson was also a charter member of the Prime Minister's National Advisory Board on Science and Technology (1987) and the founding chair of the Fields Institute for Research in Mathematics. The Academy, which has \$35 million over 10 years in federal funding, will be a source of expert advice on scientific aspects of important domestic and international issues.

BC goes hip: The BC government is investing \$60.5 million to ramp up its wait time management, with a focus on joint and hip patients. Included in the package of reforms is \$25 million for 2 new operating rooms dedicated to hip and knee replacements; another \$25 million to increase joint replacement surgeries across the province; \$5 million for a surgical patient registry; and \$5.5 million for a research centre for hip health. About 4500 joint patients have waited longer than 6 months, the recommended benchmark.

Physician supply: Canada needs a national body to coordinate physician human resource planning, delegates to a national conference agreed. In late January, 130 delegates from government and professional organizations attended the National Conference on Physician Human Resources, organized by Task Force Two: A Physician Human Resource Strategy for Canada, that is funded by the federal government and the medical community. The delegates also agreed that a team approach involving physicians and other health care providers is part of the solution to problems such as physician burnout and access issues. Urgent physician shortages in some regions, certain fields (e.g., family medicine, obstetrics) and among Canada's First Nations population must be addressed rapidly, the delegates stated. A final report from the Task Force is due in March (www.physicianhr.ca).



Donate a day: Canadian Physicians for Aid and Relief is challenging Canadian health practitioners to donate all or part of the day's income on World Health Day (Apr. 7) toward building healthy communities in Africa. CPAR (www.cpar.ca) works with rural African communities on primary health care initiatives aimed at reducing the burden of HIV-AIDS, increasing access to clean water and sanitation facilities, promoting healthy pregnancies and educating people about sexual and reproductive health. — Compiled by Barbara Sibbald, CMAJ

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