

Update from the Chair

Mark Fontes, ND



To CAND members and my colleagues,

It is with many mixed emotions that I write my last update for the *CAND Journal* as Chair of the Canadian Association of Naturopathic Doctors (CAND). The update provides me with a moment to reflect on my 9 years as a CAND board member, the last 3 as Chair.

When I first joined the CAND board in 2014, a lot of work was being done by the Board and staff to clarify the mandate of the CAND, *who* it serves, and *how*, as the national association, we can provide the best possible results for our “customers.” This led to the formation of the CAND core customer groups, each of which is led by a CAND Board Director – Naturopathic Doctor Membership, Student Membership, Government Relations, Insurance Companies, and Corporate Partners. We still use these groups today to guide and focus the work the CAND does on behalf of its members.

It has been an honour to be a part of many significant projects the CAND has undertaken on behalf of the profession, including: the National Awareness campaign; the Better Health Together campaign; government successes, such as the recent coverage for Veterans; upgrading and updating the CAND website; and organizing and implementing a successful Naturopathic Medicine Week, which gathers more momentum each year.

In early 2020, the CAND had to pivot and focus on the impact of COVID-19 on our profession. With the aid of our government

relations experts, Hill and Knowlton, and with input from the membership, the CAND engaged with the Ministry of Finance to ensure that the governments’ financial aid programs were available to NDs and clinics. Our advocacy work with government also resulted in NDs being included in the Public Health Agency of Canada’s (PHAC’s) “Guidelines for the Health Sector” in the Community Health Section. As a board, we learned a lot during this time and understood the importance of providing clear and consistent communication to our members. As an association, we never strayed from our messaging to government about the important role Naturopathic Doctors play in our healthcare system addressing the healthcare needs of Canadians across the country.

Over the past year, the CAND Board has reviewed our core customer groups, and it is currently working hard setting the stage for many great years ahead.

It has been an honour to be a part of the CAND Board and to have worked with dedicated Naturopathic Doctors from across Canada. I would also like to thank our Executive Director, Shawn O’Reilly, for all of her excellent work and commitment to advance our profession.

With gratitude,
Dr. Mark Fontes ND

Dr. Mark Fontes, ND, is Chair of the Canadian Association of Naturopathic Doctors.

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