

Update from the Chair and Executive Director

Mark Fontes, ND, Chair and Shawn O'Reilly, Executive Director



Dear members,
We hope you and your families have been keeping well during this challenging time. Over the past several months we have certainly encountered many difficulties and obstacles including changing our clinic policies and procedures, operating in new and different ways, communicating with patients about these changes and working through the governments various financial aid programs which we continued to update you on.

More recently, it has been reassuring to see many of us returning to our clinics to continue to provide the important care we provide to patients. Telemedicine has its advantages and conveniences but we have heard from many of you that patients have requested in-person care more of late and it is in that setting that we can truly work to the full scope of our profession. Naturopathic medicine is crucial to the health of all Canadians and the impact of this pandemic has amplified the importance of our work.

We continue to be in regular contact with key members of government including the Ministry of Finance, Health Canada, the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) and the Natural and Non- Pharmaceutical Health Products Directorate (NNHPD). Our advocacy efforts on behalf of the profession focus on access to the government's financial benefits as well as stressing the value of naturopathic medicine during this critical health crisis. As provided in one of our COVID-19 updates, following a request from the CAND, PHAC updated its Health Sector Guidelines to remove reference to "naturopaths" in the section on Pre-Hospital Care and Community Care (section 3.2.5), replacing it with the correct title "Naturopathic Doctors". We also stressed our concern that naturopathic doctors were not included in the list of "Additional Health Care Workers" under section 4.3.2, "Optimal Use of Health Care Workers" alongside nurse practitioners etc. PHAC committed to considering changes to the list to include naturopathic doctors for the next iteration of the guidance document. In a recent meeting with PHAC we underlined the importance of ensuring all qualified health care practitioners, including naturopathic doctors are utilized to their full potential to deal with the impact COVID – 19 is having on the health of Canadians. Our request was noted and will be given further

consideration by the PHAC Secretariat. At that meeting, and as NDs are experts in lifestyle management, PHAC accepted our offer of assistance in developing communications for the public on the importance of sleep, eating a healthy diet, exercise and mental health in order to maintain optimal health as the country deals with this pandemic.

Earlier this year, the CAND announced that it had established the Diversity & Inclusion Committee chaired by Board Director Dr. Sandra Murphy, ND. At our Annual General Meeting, we asked that any members who were interested in assisting in this important work reach out to the CAND. We thank all of you who have volunteered your time. The Committee held its inaugural meeting over the summer to discuss the issues within the profession, goals and to outline action items to address them. As a first step, The CAND Board of Directors and Staff will undergo cultural competency/ anti-racism/LGBTQ2S+ friendly training. We will update the membership as this important work continues.

The CAND board of directors is comprised of eleven naturopathic doctors from across Canada who are committed to supporting the profession and advocating for improved awareness and access to naturopathic medicine. On September 9th, we held a virtual board meeting to plan for the fall and revisit our goals and strategies to better serve our members.

Part of this work includes bringing more awareness to the important work we do as naturopathic doctors and the value of naturopathic medicine. As shared at the Annual General Meeting in June, we are very excited about the launch of our new communications and engagement strategy, which is focused on pro-active positive messaging about our profession and the important role we have in the health care system. All messaging is anchored in our strategic platform – "Better Health, Together". We will be looking to all members to get involved and share how naturopathic medicine contributes to the health and wellness of Canadians. We will continue to provide you with more information and how you can get involved as the plan continues to roll out.

On behalf of the CAND board of directors, we would like to thank all of our members for your continued support.

Thank you,

Mark Fontes, ND
Chair

Shawn O'Reilly
Executive Director