

EXECUTIVE REPORT

Jessica Harris, Vice-President of Government Affairs
CFMS Annual General Meeting – Edmonton, AB
September 22-25, 2016



I. DESCRIPTION OF POSITION

The Vice-President of Government Affairs (VP GA) has a variety of duties related to leading and coordinating local, provincial, and national advocacy efforts of the CFMS. More specifically, the VP GA serves as Chair of the CFMS Government Affairs and Advocacy Committee (GAAC) and leads the organization of the annual CFMS Lobby Day in Ottawa. In conjunction with the National Officer of Health Policy, the VP GA guides the Committee on Health Policy in a regular review of existing policy documents and the creation of new documents. The VP GA will also actively collaborate with the Vice President Education on issues related to education that require political involvement. Finally, the VP GA will represent the CFMS to various external committees and organizations as deemed necessary by the president and executive.

The CFMS Government Affairs and Advocacy Committee (GAAC) exists to both solicit the broader opinion of Canadian medical students on a wide variety of issues as well as to help take action at the local, provincial, and national levels. The CFMS GAAC is composed of the Chair (VP GA) and one to two representatives from each CFMS member school, selected by the individual medical societies. The mandate of the CFMS GAAC includes, but is not limited to:

1. Provide a grassroots framework to determine and advocate for the interests of the CFMS and its membership;
2. Cultivate leadership and advocacy skills in CFMS membership, and provide further opportunities for involvement with CFMS;
3. Assist with CFMS national lobbying efforts.

II. ACTIVITIES

Date	Meeting	Location
September 17-20, 2015	CFMS Annual General Meeting	Windsor, ON
September 20, 2015	Transition Meeting with outgoing VP GA Melanie Bechard	Windsor, ON
October 4, 2015	CFMS Government Affairs & Advocacy Committee (GAAC) Meeting	Teleconference
October 5, 2015	1:1 Meeting with CFMS President	Teleconference
October 7, 2015	Clinical Investigator Trainee Association of Canada (CITAC) Meeting	Teleconference
October 9, 2015	AFMC-Infoway eHealth Advocacy Program – Engaging with Learners	Teleconference
October 16-18, 2015	CFMS Fall Executive Meeting	Ottawa, ON
October 22, 2015	AFMC-Infoway eHealth Faculty Development Workshop Series - Personal & Shared Information Management	Teleconference
November 1, 2015	Clinical Investigator Trainee Association of Canada (CITAC) Meeting	Teleconference

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 Global Health Program | Programme de santé mondiale

Date	Meeting	Location
November 1, 2015	CFMS Government Affairs & Advocacy Committee (GAAC) Meeting	Teleconference
November 10, 2015	Meeting with MP Ralph Goodale's office regarding logistics for CFMS Lobby Day	Teleconference
November 10, 2015	1:1 Meeting with CFMS President regarding CFMS Lobby Day	Teleconference
November 15, 2015	CFMS Lobby Day Planning Meeting	Teleconference
November 16, 2015	1:1 Meeting with CFMS National Officer of Health Policy (NOHP)	Teleconference
November 19, 2015	Physician Resource Planning Task Force Summit	Ottawa, ON
November 22, 2015	CFMS Lobby Day Research Committee Meeting	Teleconference
November 22, 2015	CFMS Fall Executive T/C	Teleconference
November 23, 2015	AFMC-Infoway eHealth Faculty Development Workshop Series – Clinical Decision Management	Teleconference
November 24, 2015	CFMS Committee On Health Policy (COHP) Meeting	Teleconference
November 29, 2015	CFMS Government Affairs & Advocacy Committee (GAAC) Meeting	Teleconference
December 1, 2015	FMEC PG Transitions Career Planning and Residency Matching Process Working Group	Teleconference
December 2, 2015	Clinical Investigator Trainee Association of Canada (CITAC) Meeting	Teleconference
December 8, 2015	1:1 Meeting with CFMS VP Finance	Teleconference
December 10, 2015	1:1 Meeting with CFMS National Officer of Health Policy (NOHP)	Teleconference
December 15, 2015	AFMC-Infoway eHealth Faculty Development Workshop Series – Health Communication Management	Teleconference
January 8-10, 2016	CFMS Winter Executive Meeting	Toronto, ON
January 11, 2016	CFMS Social Media and Media Engagement Committee	Teleconference
January 17, 2016	CFMS Government Affairs & Advocacy Committee (GAAC) Meeting	Teleconference
January 18, 2016	CFMS Lobby Day Research Committee Meeting	Teleconference
January 28, 2016	CFMS Lobby Day Logistics Meeting with CFMS Lobby Day Coordinator and CMA	Teleconference
February 3, 2016	1:1 Meeting with Dr. Van Deven from Western regarding Service Learning Credits in UME	Teleconference
February 19, 2016	Final CFMS Lobby Day Preparations with CFMS Lobby Day Coordinator	Ottawa, ON
February 20-22, 2016	CFMS Lobby Day Weekend	Ottawa, ON

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Date	Meeting	Location
February 20, 2016	CMA Media Training with CFMS Executive	Ottawa, ON
February 20, 2016	CFMS Government Affairs & Advocacy Committee (GAAC) Meeting	Ottawa, ON
March 6, 2016	CFMS Winter Executive T/C	Teleconference
March 7, 2016	Feedback on Federation of Medical Regulatory Authorities of Canada (FMRAC) Draft Framework on Blood Borne Pathogens	eSurvey
March 18, 2016	1:1 Meeting with OMSA Director of Representation regarding OMSA Lobby Day	Teleconference
March 22, 2016	Interprofessional Medical Education Alliance Meeting regarding Lobby Day	Teleconference
March 26, 2016	1:1 Meeting with CFMS National Officer of Health Policy (NOHP)	Teleconference
March 28, 2016	AFMC Informatics Group – eHealth Subgroup Meeting	Teleconference
April 10, 2016	CFMS Government Affairs & Advocacy Committee (GAAC) Meeting	Teleconference
April 11-12, 2016	FMEQ Journée d’Action Politique	Québec City, QC
April 14-16, 2016	CFMS Spring General Meeting	Montréal, QC
April 14, 2016	CFMS-FMEQ Executive Meeting	Montréal, QC
April 15, 2016	MD Financial Leadership Awards Cocktail	Montréal, QC
April 16, 2016	AFMC Informatics Group – eHealth Subgroup Meeting	Montréal, QC
April 17, 2016	2016 CaRMS Forum	Montréal, QC
April 17, 2016	CFMS Executive Meeting with Medical Council of Canada (MCC)	Montréal, QC
May 18, 2016	Presentation to Parliamentary Standing Committee on Health (HESA) re: Development of a National Pharmacare Program - CANCELLED	Ottawa, ON
June 3-5, 2016	CFMS Summer Executive Meeting	Calgary, AB
June 7, 2015	OMSA/CFMS response to Ontario MOHLTC pause in PGY-1 residency position reductions	Document review/edit
June 15, 2016	AFMC Informatics Group – eHealth Subgroup Meeting	Teleconference
June 29, 2016	CFMS Government Affairs & Advocacy Committee (GAAC) Meeting	Teleconference
July 10, 2016	1:1 Meeting with Interested Candidate for VP GA	Teleconference
August 7, 2016	1:1 Meeting with CFMS National Officer of Health Policy (NOHP)	Teleconference
August 13, 2016	CFMS Summer Executive T/C	Teleconference

EXECUTIVE REPORT

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September 22-25, 2016



Date	Meeting	Location
August 27, 2016	Meeting with National IT Officer and National Officer of Health Policy (NOHP) re: Advocacy Tracker Online	Teleconference
August 30, 2016	1:1 with GAAC re: CFMS Advocacy Strategy & Lobby Day	Teleconference
August 31, 2016	CFMS Global Health and Government Affairs meeting re: CMA Advocacy Training	Teleconference
September 22, 2016	Presentation to Parliamentary Standing Committee on Health (HESA) re: Development of a National Pharmacare Program	Ottawa, ON
September 22-25, 2016	CFMS Annual General Meeting	Edmonton, AB
September 25, 2016	Transition Meeting with incoming VP GA	Edmonton, AB

III. PRIORITIES AND PROJECT AREAS

CFMS Lobby Day

On February 22nd, 2016 the CFMS held one of its annual flagship events – CFMS Lobby Day. Over 65 medical students from across Canada met with Members of Parliament in Ottawa to discuss strategies for cost-effective and equitable access to necessary medications. Canada is the only developed nation in the world with universal health care but no corresponding universal pharmaceutical coverage. This is an important issue for the CFMS and over the past few years we have shared our support for a comprehensive pharmacare strategy that would help address our economic inefficiencies and health inequities. This year our ASK focused on the creation of a national formulary, as a first step towards a national pharmacare program. We received positive feedback on the Hill and our documents even made their way to the desk of Canada’s Health Minister.

Furthermore, the House of Commons Standing Committee on Health (HESA) has been studying the ‘Development of a National Pharmacare Program’ for the past six months. The CFMS was invited to present to HESA on May 18, 2016, however, that meeting was cancelled last minute due to a variety of unexpected events on the Hill. The meeting has been rescheduled for September 22, 2016 and I will go to Ottawa to present the CFMS medical student perspective on the issue. Very glad to see Canada’s policy makers taking this issue seriously and hopefully meaningful changes are forthcoming.

Advocacy Tracker

While there is active involvement around writing, presenting, and passing policy and position papers by General Assembly (GA), the question of what comes after a paper has been passed by GA is one that has continued to surface amongst our members.

In 2013, the Government Affairs portfolio expanded to include the Committee on Health Policy (COHP). The overall aim of the COHP is to keep policy and position papers current while also helping to propose future directions for new ones. Under the leadership of our National Officer of Health Policy (NOHP),

EXECUTIVE REPORT

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Tamara Ibrahim, the Committee on Health Policy has been developing a method for applying metrics to our papers so we can track our advocacy efforts in to the future. After a very engaging discussion on the subject at SGM, Tamara and myself have been working with the National IT Officer to get the Advocacy Tracker online and active, which we aim to have available by AGM or soon after. Stay tuned!

Advocacy in the Curriculum

This project was spearheaded by David Benrimoh, COHP member and GAAC representative from McGill, and evolved to include many other GAAC reps and CFMS members from across the country. The project centered on a policy paper with complete sample curriculum, which was passed by the CFMS at SGM 2016. David also worked tirelessly to promote the curriculum to medical school administration across the country and most recently the policy paper was accepted for publication in the AMEE MedEdPublish. Huge congratulations to David and all those who were involved with the project! Future students will certainly benefit from your hard work at promoting the importance of advocacy training for medical learners.

Local Initiatives

While CFMS Lobby Day is an event with significant reach and political impact for our federation as a whole, the grassroots advocacy events organized by our local reps allow for tremendous impact at the level of our individual members. One of my goals at the outset of my term as VP Government Affairs was to foster local advocacy efforts and I'm happy to report that to this end, our GAAC has been very successful!

Highlights of local advocacy events that have taken place over the past year include Memorial's efforts to introduce a concussion education program in school curricula, advocacy aimed at encouraging general practitioners to take on refugee families at Dalhousie's Nova Scotia campus, a town hall focused on addressing youth homelessness at Dalhousie's New Brunswick campus, an interprofessional health student summit at McGill, a national pharmacare letter writing campaign at uOttawa, a Health and Human Rights Conference at Queens, faculty collaboration on advocacy in the curriculum at U of T, a Health Advocacy Symposium at McMaster, a discussion on the Ontario-OMA negotiations at Western, advocacy around harm reduction and managed alcohol programs at NOSM, a first-ever Advocacy Weekend in Manitoba, a panel discussion on physician assisted dying in Saskatchewan, a viewing session of the Federal Leaders' Debate at U of A, planning for an advocacy week at U of C, a pharmacare speakers series with Dr. Steve Morgan at UBC, as well as CMA Advocacy and Media training at nearly every member school and student-run Provincial Lobby Days in BC, Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec, and Nova Scotia!

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CFMS Election Toolkit

The 'CFMS Election Toolkit' was a collaborative effort with the intent of helping medical students navigate the election process. The toolkit included a how-to voting guide tailored to medical students, a template letter on pharmacare to use in reaching out to candidates, and a summary of health care highlights from each political party's platform. Finally, we encouraged medical students to connect on social media using the hashtags #elxn42 and #medvote. It was a great way to get out the *med* vote!

Sample of documents and articles produced

- [CFMS Election Toolkit](#)
- The Medical Post:
 - [CFMS says now that U.S. meets international standards, Canada should reduce deferral on gay blood donation to 1 year](#)
- CFMS Lobby Day:
 - Delegate Backgrounder – Pharmacare in Canada: *An Advocacy Initiative by Canadian Medical Students to Improve Access to Medicines*
 - MP Handout – Pharmacare in Canada: *Improving Access to Medicines for all Canadians*
- CFMS Annual Review:
 - [Catching up with the GAAC: Highlights from the Government Affairs and Advocacy Committee](#)
- AMEE MedEdPublish:
 - [An Advocacy and Leadership Curriculum to Train Socially Responsible Medical Learners](#)

IV. FOLLOW UP, VISION, GOALS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THIS POSITION

CFMS Lobby Day

The coming year will see fundamental changes to Lobby Day and how it aligns with the overall CFMS advocacy strategy. There have been meaningful discussions over the past year, both amongst the general assembly and at the executive table, around how best to determine the focus of our advocacy efforts and truly what the meaning of Lobby Day is to our organization. This is an evolving conversation and one that will entertain a major portion of the coming year. Without question, Lobby Day is a flagship event for the CFMS and it deserves the time and attention to ensure it is the best it can be.

Advocacy Tracker

The presentation of the Advocacy Tracker at SGM by our NOHP, Tamara Ibrahim, and COHP member, David Benrimoh, was very well received. The two of them put countless hours of work in to getting this project off the ground and for that they deserve a round of applause. The general assembly appreciated the visual layout and the interactive format that will help to connect students working on similar projects. Getting the Tracker online and functioning will be an ongoing, but very important, project over the coming year.

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Once the Advocacy Tracker is online and being used to its full potential, the organization will be better suited to properly evaluate the interest and focus of our membership – i.e. which topics are currently being researched and/or topics with the most active advocacy work.

Looking back on the year, I'm very proud of the work the Government Affairs portfolio has accomplished. I believe we've taken important steps to improving the reach and impact of the organization's advocacy efforts for years to come. And while the national work is always thrilling, I'd have to say I'm proudest of our local grassroots advocacy successes. The GAAC representatives never cease to amaze me with their vision and determination; they are constantly learning from one another and sharing best practices to help improve advocacy opportunities for their fellow students. Without their hard work and determination, none of our successes would have been possible. A sincere thank you goes out to each and every one of them.

While my term is coming to an end, please feel free to contact me with questions, comments, and/or ideas for further advocacy initiatives!

Sincerely,

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Vice-President Government Affairs, 2015-2016 | Vice-Présidente aux affaires gouvernementales, 2015-2016
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