

Annual Report to the Board of the Canadian Association of General Surgeons

2010-2011

Name of Committee: **Professionalism Committee**

Name of Chair: Dr. Cliff Yaffe

1) Committee Activities

The Professionalism Committee was reactivated in September 2010. The Committee met by teleconference in November 2010 and in March and May 2011. The Committee is scheduled to meet face-to-face at the Canadian Surgery Forum in London September 2011.

The members reviewed its terms of reference of the Committee in order to determine the priorities for discussion.

A list of liability and professionalism issues facing general surgeons was compiled. The members decided to concentrate their efforts on the following issues:

a) **Communicating in the electronic age**

Dr. Sam Bugis researched this topic and presented an excellent report (attached) which provides guidelines for general surgeons when using electronic media to communicate with other physicians and patients.

b) **Shared patient activities and "handovers"**

This issue has become very important with the rapidly-expanding acute care surgery services where many different surgeons might care for the same patient. The Committee conducted a national survey (attached) on patient handovers through the CAGS website. There was national agreement that some process of consistent handover was important for patient safety. The majority agreed that face-to-face handover was important. Telephone and electronic handovers were performed but these modalities were less frequently utilized.

c) **Volunteerism**

International surgery and other activities will be explored in more detail at future meetings. Dr. R Mulloy is responsible for researching this topic which will be discussed in London in September, 2011.

The Committee discussed the CAGS **Draft Position on Resources for General Surgeons**. Dr. Paul Belliveau was charged with the task of reviewing this document and leading a discussion at the meeting in London in September, 2011.

The Committee discussed and unanimously endorsed the recent CAGS Endoscopy Statement: **Endoscopy in Canada**.

The Professionalism Committee has established a dialogue and agreement with the Canadian Medical Protective Association (CMPA) with respect to planning future joint educational sessions covering pertinent topics for general surgeons with respect to liability and professionalism.

2) Committee Goals

A major goal of the Committee is to identify areas and practices in General Surgery where there may be increased risks of medicolegal liability or potential challenges pertaining to professionalism and to recommend educational and other initiatives in order to address these areas of concern.

An important goal of the Professionalism Committee is the establishment of a liaison with the Canadian Medical Protective Association (CMPA) in order to help identify and initiate educational strategies for CAGS members.

3) Recommendations to the Board

The Professionalism Committee should be involved in planning educational sessions pertaining to professionalism issues for future CSF meetings.

It would be helpful if the CAGS Board could identify individuals who are interested in professionalism and encourage those individuals to become future members of the Professionalism Committee.

4) Long-term Goals

- a) The Professionalism Committee will strive to cover all of the important issues pertaining to professionalism and general surgeons. The issues may change over time as newer technologies emerge, as work hours may become more restricted due to safety concerns and as availability of resources becomes less certain.
- b) The Professionalism Committee will strive to participate in the planning of educational sessions pertaining to professionalism and liability for general surgeons.
- c) The professionalism Committee will maintain a liaison with CMPA for the purposes of education and statistical information pertaining to liability issues facing general surgeons.