

## Our Mission and Vision

As a new organization with lots happening, it is worth revisiting and revising our mission and vision statements so that we can share an understanding of what we are about and where we want to go. At the last Patients' Association of Canada (PAC) meeting on November 17, we had a good chance to think together about these statements. Alan Engelstad facilitated a lively session with rich discussion. Vytas Mickevicius explained the role of mission and vision statements in organizations. There was a lot of clarification and many suggestions emerged. The cards listed six categories of activity: research and education, collecting and disseminating experiences, strengthening the patient influence on the governance of the system, considering the relationship between urgency and importance, presenting the patient perspective through a stronger patient voice, and welcoming and joining other patients throughout the system. On November 25 Elke Grenzer, Neil Stuart, Vytas Mickevicius and I met with Alan Engelstad to review the results and develop new provisional statements. Here they are:

### **Provisional Vision Statement:**

The Patients' Association of Canada will be the leader in the promotion of the patient's voice in health care in the next five years.

### **Provisional Mission Statement:**

As a patient-led and patient-governed organization, the Patients' Association of Canada promotes and enhances the role and influence of the patient voice and perspective in health care.

## The Patients' Choice Awards

The very first Patients' Choice Awards Ceremony took place in Peterborough Ontario on December 1, 2010. The people of Peterborough sent in some wonderful letters of nomination. The jury was made up of members of the PAC including Anita Stern, Alex Jadad, Kathy Kastner, and Saeed Hydaralli. It was not so hard to choose the winners.

Two very special physicians, Dr. Carolyn Brown and Dr. David Newport were chosen. Both are members of the Primary Health Services of Peterborough. The patients who nominated them really appreciate their capacity to listen, to hear what they have to say and to show how much they care. Dr. Brown was particularly commended for always being available to take the time to "listen to all the complaints" that a patient brought, and "explaining everything clearly and completely". The atmosphere in Dr. Newport's office was described as particularly welcoming and Dr. Newport always gives his patients "his full attention.... feel free to ask questions, offer opinions and voice concerns..."

The room was filled with nominators, the great and good of Peterborough, doctors, the representatives of the Ontario Medical Association (OMA) and Elke Grenzer and Saeed Hydaralli came as members of PAC. The local press wrote it up in the Peterborough Examiner, and the local TV Station interviewed us for their news broadcast.

Dr. Don Harterre, the President of Primary Health Services of Peterborough chaired the proceedings. He introduced Dr. Mark MacLeod the President of the OMA who spoke about the Patients' Choice Awards and how important they are for everyone. I then gave a talk on the reason for the awards, told everyone a bit about PAC and then presented the awards. The beautiful plaques were designed and made as a donation to PAC by our own Zal Press. Dr. McLeod gave each of the doctors a check for \$250 made out to their favourite charity. A good time was had by all.

We should give special thanks to Patrick Nelson and Catherine Flaman from the OMA who did heroic work to make the event a reality and to Christina Spencer who made sure that nominators would be there.

We are looking forward to the next Awards which will come in 2011. We hope that we will be able to expand them to other health disciplines and make them part of our educational efforts.

### **A New Policy Research Project**

Last year we asked graduate students from the School of Public Policy and Governance to help us by reviewing complaints mechanisms across the country. Their report demonstrated clearly the wide variability of how complaints were dealt with across Canada. In many cases there was no way to register a complaint to an independent impartial body. In others the provincial ombudsman provided an independent ear to complaints. In some parts of Canada patients are asked to begin the complaints process by registering the complaint with the professional first even though doing so might lead to retribution. We are working on finalizing the report and will publish it in the not too distant future.

The project we proposed for this year is to see what the policies are across Canada with respect to requiring patient membership on the committees of publicly funded health care organizations. This can include a requirement for patients to be elected to the board, a requirement that the organization strike a patient committee to review patient experience, or any other formal requirement that brings patients into decision making contexts. An analysis of the effectiveness of these policies might include a survey to see how widely they are implemented and whether once implemented they have any impact on organizational functioning. This work will allow us to better understand what the range of policies is and where changes might be made to increase patient participation with a view to improving the health system.

Three students have formed a group to take up this challenge and we have so far had two meetings with Hillary Connolly, Maria Edwards and Tsz-Lung Cheung. They are actively pursuing the research and will have some preliminary findings for us by the end of this month. We hope to have their report reviewed and circulated soon after.

### **Launch Update**

February 15, 2011 is the day of our formal launch. It will be at Bram and Bluma Appel Salon on the second floor of the Toronto Reference Library. We are planning a conference to consider

new ways to improve the health care experience through more effective governance of quality and patient safety. Participants will come from a cross section of the health care system and pursue the issue during the day. It will be followed by a launch cocktail party which will begin at 5:00 pm after the conference closes and will include a few talks and a book launch. More details will come out soon but for now keep the whole day free if you can. We will be sending out letters of invitation in the near future.

### **Other Updates**

The Canadian Health Services Research Foundation (CHSRF) research project is moving along and will begin in the New Year. We have submitted our application for ethics review, an updated budget and a response to some of the review panel's questions.

We have received questions to clarify our application for a grant from the Trillium Foundation and have formulated and submitted our responses. We await their decision which is due early in 2011.

We are waiting for the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) to review our request for charitable status. Our attorney is pointing out that there are donations awaiting their decision. Hopefully this will help move it along.

### **Upcoming Member Meeting**

The next meeting will be January 18, 2011 from 6:30-8:30 pm at the Centre for Global eHealth Innovation which is located on the fourth floor of the R. Fraser Elliot Building. Please email to confirm your attendance.

Patiently yours,

Sholom Glouberman

The Patients Association is a patient-led and patient-governed non-profit organization that seeks to promote and enhance the voice of patients in health care. We believe that more involved patients can help improve everyone's health care experience. If you would like to learn more go to our website at [www.patientsassociation.ca](http://www.patientsassociation.ca) or write to [Communications@patientsassociation.ca](mailto:Communications@patientsassociation.ca).