



BC Society of Homeopaths
Annual General Meeting Minutes
March 28, 2015

In Attendance:

Marie Lamey, President
Susan Forbes, Treasurer
Lucy De Pieri, Communications
Christy Zettl, Membership Secretary
Sabrina Foldi, Secretary
Lynn Mackay, Director
Nicole Duelli
Shannon Patrick (non-member)
Roland Guenther
Sonya McLeod
Tina Spathis
Colin Gillies
Nathalie D. Allen
Ming Dinh
Julia Mohrs
Maryanne Campeau (non-member)
Allison Douglas-Tourner
Faiqa Riaz

1. Acceptance of Minutes and Financial Reports from last AGM held Mar. 23/14

Marie distributed last year's Minutes for review. There being no changes, by majority vote, the Minutes were accepted.

Marie distributed the Financial Report for discussion; Susan noted our bookkeeper advised her on how to organize our finances since we are now using PayPal. As a result, it now looks as if we have more money than we actually do. In fact, our balance looks significantly higher than it was last year.

Other items of note included:

- Susan recorded our assets eg. T-shirts and brochures; these are now on the balance sheet.
- There are new categories in the Financial Report.
- Some categories have higher amounts than last year; for example, office expenses increased due to our Membership Drive, which cost roughly \$300; the consult with the bookkeeper was also roughly \$300; money was invested into the

website to keep it current with forms; to list the Society in online directories, we paid roughly \$200 for a mailing address at a UPS store.

-There is now an Accounts Receivable category; this is the money in limbo from PayPal.

2.Review of Last Year's Activities

Each member received the 2014-2015 Annual Report. Marie discussed the report with the members and some key points are here:

Members

Marie reported our membership numbers are down slightly from last year, when we had 63 members. The lower numbers are likely the result of there being no new Homeopathy graduates and this was the reason for this year's Membership Drive. This year we sent letter mail, which included an invitation to our Society and this year's conference; we mailed to roughly 100 non-member Homeopaths in BC.

Occupational Title Protection (OTP)

Marie reported OTP is no longer an option for us due to changes in the Society Act. We met with our lawyer and discussed the options for moving forward. We now feel that our two best options are either self-regulation or joining an existing college.

Our lawyer offered to write a paper for us, which would outline the pros and cons for our options; this paper would cost us roughly \$2000. He also said he could write a smaller paper for roughly \$1000. Marie explained we wanted to discuss our lawyer's suggestions with the membership before making a decision; we will discuss this later in the meeting.

Marie added Susan has now compiled the Bylaw changes into one document.

Faiqa asked how we are affected now that OTP is no longer an option for us. Marie said we wanted OTP so that we could have a form of self-regulation. As Homeopaths, we are not regulated under the Health Professions Act. OTP would have given us a title of our choosing, such as "Professional Homeopath"; then, only members of the BCSH could use that title. This could protect the public in that someone who's only taken a weekend course could not call themselves a Professional Homeopath.

Marie added things needed to be in place for us to acquire OTP; we had to represent at least 60% of all Homeopaths in BC, and we had to have requirements, an entrance exam, standards of practice, disciplinary action, and a code of ethics. Our lawyer said these documents are also required if we choose to self-regulate or join a college.

Regarding disciplinary action, Marie reported we have received complaints regarding Homeopaths this year, but none were our members. If we do receive a complaint about a member, we need to have a procedure in place. Christy said the procedure is pretty standard; in fact, in creating each of these documents, we have looked into what other groups have in place and implemented the aspects that apply to us.

Faiqa asked if we can no longer call ourselves Professional Homeopaths. Marie said we have three options: self-regulation (what we are doing now), using a trademark name eg. BCHom (though we would confirm a name with our lawyer), or join with another college where there's an alliance in how we practice. Our lawyer offered to write a document that would provide more detail on what these options mean.

Susan said she has been very impressed with this lawyer; his document would summarize everything, as well as the cost of each option. We could use the document as a reference point to see which option is best for us. Our lawyer also expressed some concern that we may not have the financial resources to have a title and defend it when needed.

Adobe Forms

Marie reported we have added new Adobe forms to our website; however, we were recently notified that Adobe will soon be discontinuing that service. In its place we will be using JotForm for only \$9.95 per month; however, we need to re-create our forms in JotForm, and so Marie and Christy will be doing this in May or June. We can use our current forms until June 15.

Susan noted that Adobe has reimbursed us for this service for the remainder of the year.

HANS

Marie reported we have continued our ad with HANS and they have grandfathered our rate. The publication now has a larger circulation and a larger format, and HANS now hosts networking events. In fact, to represent the BCSH and the VHA, Lucy, Sabrina, and Caroline Dent went to the HANS career fair last year. We declined to go this year since last year's event was a bit slow and the VHA was not going to be involved this year.

Insurance Coverage for Member Services

Marie reported we have been contacting insurance companies to get the BCSH under their Homeopathy coverage. So far, only ClaimSecure has responded and now we are set up with it. If your patient has Homeopathy coverage on their plan, you just need to note your membership number on the receipt, and then the patient can get their reimbursement.

We have five more insurance companies to contact. Marie spent a month emailing with Pacific Blue Cross and has now given up. When Marie contacted Green Shield, she received a long application form; one of the questions on the form asked us to list the other insurance companies who have approved us. At that time, we had approval from only one insurance company. Marie felt it was best to complete the application form once we had more companies to list.

Christy added we might be approved with Desjardins now; they will be contacting her shortly to confirm that. SunLife may also approve us as well, but she will confirm that.

Lynn said she contacted ClaimSecure to confirm we are on the list, but found out that we were not on it. She thought this could be a typo and recommends we check this.

Marie said we are lobbying to have our services covered; some plans only cover Homeopathy from a registered profession eg. from an ND. She added Christy has been doing a lot for us on this insurance task; she has provided a list of the insurance companies and noted where we stand with each one.

**** Action Items:**

- Christy to confirm that the BCSH is on SunLife's list.
- The Board to confirm that the BCSH is on ClaimSecure's list.

Nationwide Organization

Marie reported we will be participating with other Homeopathy societies in creating a nationwide organization. We imagine this would be a great opportunity to have one presence for promotion, media, etc. We also hope this group will take on insurance lobbying across Canada as a whole; that would be very helpful.

Susan added we would also like to clarify some things with the insurance companies. For example, there was a situation where two patients were on the same plan; the two had the same practitioner, but only one of them received reimbursement for the service. We would like to know what happened here.

Christy said Homeopathy coverage can often be added to a plan for a small amount.

Mentorship Program

The Board has been busy with many initiatives this year and so there has been little progress on the Mentorship Program. Our goal was to post on our site a list of people who are willing to volunteer as mentors. We will continue to work on this.

****Action Item** – The Board to continue to work on creating a list of people who are willing to volunteer as mentors.

Member Handbook

Marie reported she is working on a Member Handbook. This document seems to keep growing; she will have to decide when to consider it complete and distribute it to the membership.

****Action Item** – Marie to decide on an end goal, or a completion date, for the Member Handbook.

3.Items for Vote

Marie noted the following items are to be voted on:

- Change CEU requirements to 6 per membership year instead of 12 every 2 years. This eases the burden of tracking CEUs for membership renewal over a 2-year period, which may differ for each member depending on their starting date for membership.

Julia noted that we would no longer be able to carry over the CEUs from the previous year. Lucy said, each year, you could get 9 hours by just coming to the case conference. Christy said 6 credits per year is a small requirement. Marie added another way to get credits easily is by attending an online seminar, and some are actually free. Members can view upcoming events like this on our site.

Julia asked if a member who is short on CEUs could wait until the second year to report them. Susan said our Bylaws allow for that flexibility, and so the member could attach a note to this effect when they are renewing their membership. Marie noted that one member did that last year.

Nathalie asked how the CEU requirement applies to a member who starts mid-year. Marie suggested they fulfill half of the year's requirement.

Lucy said someone could write a book review or do a proving for CEUs. Julia said she's glad that there's flexibility with the CEUs.

Vote: In favor-10.

Majority vote determined the CEU requirement is now 6 per year.

➤ Bylaw 4 – New Category

Proposed: Add a new membership category for retired / non-practicing Homeopaths who were previously members.

Proposed Category: Alumni Membership OR Emeritus Membership

Proposed Price: \$30 / year

Proposed Description: This category is for members of the BCSH who have retired from practice, but would still like to support the goals of the society. This category has no voting privileges.

Marie noted the Student Membership rate would apply to this membership category; it would be a non-voting category.

Susan said we just need to decide on the name for this category. Christy suggested we call it "Fellowship". Susan wondered if that word applies to people who have retired. She said "Alumni" usually refers to graduates of a program, "Emeritus" is used when a professor retires, but neither of these apply to this category. Roland said another option is to call it "Non-Practicing Members". Tina said this is a good name because we know exactly what it means.

Marie noted we would like this category to apply to Homeopaths like Murray Feldman and Susan Gimbel, former members who have now retired. There is also the term, "Friends", but Lynn felt that "Fellowship" would be better; "Friends" is too wide a category. Tina, however, said it could be a good idea to have a wider category of people who want to support us. Lynn responded that our definition of this category states that it is for those who have retired.

Vote: Fellowship-4, Emeritus-0, Non-Practicing Member-9.
Majority vote determined the category name is Non-Practicing Member.

Bylaw 4 now reads:

“Categories of Membership:

(1)Registered Member

(2)Resident Member

(3)Associate Member

(4)Student Member

(5)Non-Practicing Member

Registered members and Resident members have full voting privileges. Student members, Associate members and Non-Practicing members are non-voting members. All membership categories, with the exceptions of the Student members and the Non-Practicing members, must fulfill Continuing Education requirements of 6 CEUs in 1 membership year (April 1st to March 31st) for membership renewal.

.....

(5) Non-Practicing Member:

This category is for members of the BCSH who have retired from practice, but would still like to support the goals of the society.”

Proposed Change to Bylaw 22 – New Category

As Bylaw 22 lists the categories, the new category, Non-Practicing Member, needs to be added to this list. As a result, Bylaw 22 now reads:

“A Registered member and a Resident Member in good standing present at a meeting of the members are entitled to one vote. Student members, Associate members and Non-Practicing members are entitled to speak at meetings of members; however, they are not entitled to vote. In all other respects Student, Associate and Non-Practicing members may exercise the rights of a member, and must be considered as a member for all other purposes with respect to a meeting of the society.”

4. Discussion of alternative options to OTP and the direction in which we want to take action in order to move forward in the upcoming year.

Marie said we could ask the lawyer to write us the document, either the \$2K or \$1K version, or we could continue with self-regulation, as we are doing currently. To create the document, the lawyer said he has a template where he could fill in the blanks, but that would take time.

Marie added we couldn't sustain a college on our own. Susan noted the Homeopaths in ON will be paying \$800 per year for their membership.

Nathalie suggested we do what the Homeopaths in Quebec did in 1990. She explained that, like us, they had little money and they found it difficult to create an organization. As a result, they joined a union. The Homeopaths now pay fees associated with the union; however, the fees are pro-rated for their level of income. Tina noted that union fees are a

small percent of your income. Nathalie added the Homeopaths in Quebec wanted a professional presence; now they've achieved that and no one can steal their title. The Board thought this was a good idea.

Tina asked if the lawyer could just write an information paper for us, one that simply outlines what we need to do. Marie responded that the paper would outline our options, but it would also explain the processes, repercussions, and cost for our options.

Tina asked if the Board feels this paper is important. Faiqa said the paper could be useful because it would explain our options, which at this point, seem unclear. She suggested we choose the smaller version of the paper; until now, she hadn't considered that there'd be a cost. Marie also felt the smaller version would be helpful.

Marie added there was an application form for OTP and this clearly outlined what we had to do. But under the Health Professions Act, what we have to do is dictated to us. As a result, we have sought the guidance of our lawyer.

Marie noted that our lawyer has not yet seen our edited Bylaws yet; Susan recently finished compiling them. Our lawyer wanted us to "beef them up, give them teeth", and he would review them for us. Susan added he also suggested we have \$10K in the bank as a safety net. Lynn added the Board members might want insurance as well.

Lynn also noted regulation means rules, and sometimes it's easier to operate under the radar, unnoticed. However, professional status is important. Christy agreed and said our professional status would protect the public. Lynn added our patients could also receive insurance coverage for our services and then pay for appointments easily. She felt we need to look at these options, but the decision on how to proceed is the membership's decision; it is not the Board's decision.

Lynn suggested we go for the \$1K paper and look into the union option.

Susan noted that we could spend \$1K on this paper, but we have another legal issue to deal with as well; we received a letter from Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) and we have a lawyer who will be assisting us with a reply; his fees may be another \$1K, and so we will likely spend over \$2K on legal fees on these two issues alone.

Marie felt we are not moving ahead quickly; she has been on the Board for seven years and we only have the Standards Document now. Generally, our process is to gather information, assess it, do what we can, and then move forward. We still need these same documents in place for any of these options ahead of us; we can continue to work on those and continue to work with the lawyer.

Marie noted that, if the lawyer recommends we make a change to the Bylaws, we have to vote on it at an AGM, and that takes time. Lynn agreed.

Ming suggested we defer the issue of which paper to choose until we find out how much we will have to spend on the VCH issue. Marie responded that we would not be spending the money for that issue right away. Instead, we would just prepare the information for next year's meeting. At this time, we would like to know what the membership thinks.

Ming wanted to know what would be missing from the smaller paper. Susan responded that it would outline the costs involved with our options, and likely have less detail than the larger paper. Christy noted that we need a strong legal footing; we have to be clear about where we stand.

Marie reported Sabrina took Minutes of our meeting with the lawyer; a lot of the information meant for the paper was actually in that meeting and is well-represented in the Minutes. The smaller version of the paper would possibly contain the information our lawyer hadn't yet told us. The larger paper may contain the information from the entire meeting plus more details.

Nicole felt this is all conjecture and she suggested we vote on allowing the Board to make a decision on which paper to choose. Marie responded that we did not want to make the decision as a Board; she would, instead, like to give the membership more info to help them make a decision. Susan added our lawyer strongly suggested we consult the membership.

Nicole asked if we could vote yes or no to the paper, and then the Board could decide which paper to choose. Ming said it seems like the meeting Minutes plus the \$1K version equals the \$2K version of the paper. Susan said we are not sure about that. Nicole said, if we have enough money, the Board could make a decision. Susan said we have enough money, but we question if and how much should be spent on this paper. That is why we are asking for input from the members.

Tina suggested we get the legal advice regarding the VCH letter and see if that takes priority over this paper. Christy suggested we then vote yes or no to the paper and then decide on which paper to choose. The Board can then decide on which paper to choose once we determine how much the issue with VCH costs. The members agreed.

Vote: In favor of having our lawyer write a paper-14.

Majority vote determined we would like our lawyer to write a paper for us.

Christy suggested we consider the union option. Susan agreed and felt it best to compare only the options of self-regulation and joining a union.

**** Action Item** – The Board to consider comparing only the options of self-regulation and joining a union.

5. Other

Letter from VCH

Marie reported we received a letter from VCH at the end of February. The letter requested we, “remove any mention that nosodes, homeopathic vaccines or homeoprophylaxis are effective against disease from [our] website and any other material [we] have available. As well, [we] need to mention both the Health Canada disclaimer and the CHPA’s 2013 statement cited above in any written or verbal communication [we] have with [our] members or the public concerning these products.”

As a result, we contacted our lawyer; unfortunately, he could not advise us on this matter due to a conflict of interest. He then recommended a lawyer for us, Gerry Fahey, who will reply to us in the next few weeks.

Marie added there were a number of inaccuracies in the VCH letter. For example, it made reference to claims on our website regarding homeopathic immunizations; however, we do not use this term anywhere on our website. Marie then noted the other issues in the letter; she also mentioned these in her email to our lawyer. The other issues were:

1. We are not making any claims – [VCH] is inferring them - and homeoprophylaxis is within our scope of practice.
2. We are also not regulated by the Health Professions Act, which is what the Public Health Act of BC governs.
3. What part of the Public Health Act of British Columbia are we violating?
4. Does this constitute restraint of trade or a violation of the Competition Act?
5. Would it be prudent to go public with this, posting it to our website and exposing their threats?
6. Would we be able to get away with changing the wording of the last sentence on the website to say "alternative forms of healthcare" vs "alternative treatments" as it says now? Or deleting that last part of the sentence altogether
7. Does Health Canada's labeling requirement apply to us compounding remedies? Or does it violate our right to compound as homeopathic practitioners? I believe it does.
8. What are the consequences of not complying with any or all of [VCH’s] requirements?

Marie asked our lawyer how we should respond to the letter and if we must comply. Our lawyer has reviewed the letter now and will draft a reply when he is back from vacation; we are expecting to hear from him in a few weeks. For now, he suggested we remove the offending part on the website, reply to the letter, and say we’ve removed this part

temporarily pending receipt of legal advice. Marie added we have now removed that part from our site. As well, we have moved the HP article to the Members Only section.

Nicole said this is a contentious issue; we should leave it alone and move on. Marie said we took offense to VCH's demands; some were unreasonable, and not applicable. Nicole asked if the issue mattered. Lucy responded that VCH wants to take us to court. Susan added the letter was addressed to each Board member individually. Marie noted the letter said we need to tell our members about "these products" and she referenced the Canadian Homeopathic Pharmaceutical Association but we do not sell products and this association has no jurisdiction over us.

Nicole said we should be allowed to disseminate information, but the back and forth is contentious. Marie said our lawyer understands we are not looking for a fight. We are seeking his advice because we want to know where we stand, which demands are reasonable, and what to tell our members. Susan said this is about being able to protect what we do. Nicole said we are not regulated; this means we don't really know what we can and can't do ourselves. From the media, she is hearing that we cannot allow an alternative to vaccines.

Nicole said she saw the homeoprophylaxis (HP) message on the front page of our website and wondered why it was there; she had never known about that practice before. Marie said the HP message was posted there in response to the CBC Marketplace expose on HP. We placed a comment on our homepage to say we support our members who offer HP.

Christy noted we cannot actually support them in their use of it, financially or legally. Julia wondered if HP could be a reason to be regulated, since we are now seen as doing harm. Tina said seeking the advice of a lawyer would be the most prudent thing to do at this time.

Roland said this is a huge issue and it is highly charged; we are all totally aware of vaccination damage. If we only treat these damaged kids, if we don't speak up about vaccination damage, then we are part of the abuse. We have the information; we can prove where the damage comes from. Classical Homeopathy hardly works on highly intoxicated kids. When we give a detoxification remedy we see what the toxin was. We have to be careful though; we have to know when it's the right time to explain that and we have to be clear that we can't do it alone.

Roland added, by putting HP out there, we are putting one of the most vulnerable parts of Homeopathy out there. As well, HP is not a part of his philosophy, and he would feel awkward to present a concept like that. We make ourselves very vulnerable in an industry that works with fear, power, and money; we are not equal to them. We cannot survive a fight at this time; there will be a time for a fight, but it is not now. We should just go along with the requests of VCH, do our good work, and stay under the radar. We don't just treat people; we also bring to them an awareness of what's happening. The parents of these kids will be on our side. They are willing to do a lot for Homeopathy when they see

their kids get better on it. We need to pick our battles wisely; this is not a battle to get into right now.

Marie agreed; she added Homeopathic groups across Canada are coming together so that we have one strong voice. There will be a unification of all of the associations in Canada; hopefully we can take on this issue as a Canada-wide group. The Marketplace episode exposed two of our members educating parents about vaccinations in their offices; the video clips of our members were taken out of context and the Homeopaths were made out to be quacks. Our mandate is to support our members in practice and that was the point of putting the message on our site.

Lynn agreed it would not be a wise move to fight at this point. Christy agreed as well and said this is not something to meet head on. Susan said we are consulting a lawyer so that we have a legal guideline; we want to know what this is all about. For example, who is the Canadian Homeopathic Pharmaceutical Association?

Sonya said, regarding compounding, we do not have to label nosodes. The CBC launched a complaint against her with Health Canada, but then Health Canada said she is off the hook. Susan said it may be that Meena Dawar, who signed the letter from VCH, has been pressured to do something in her role, but she doesn't know what she's doing.

Colin said our system will collapse eventually. Information on vaccination damage is getting around. More people are questioning pharmaceuticals and doctors. There is a groundswell coming and we need to get ready to rise to meet it. At the moment though, we don't have the power to do anything

Marie said when she receives our lawyer's reply, she will forward it to the membership. Roland said he thinks the lawyer's letter is a good thing to have. Susan felt this could be the beginning of something more and so it's good to have this lawyer on board.

Marie reported, at this time, we have complied with the letter and we are not going to repost the HP message on the homepage. As far as VCH letter is concerned, we have complied, and we don't actually need to send anything in reply. Marie added we could simply let the membership know what the lawyer recommends; it is important to know that we are acting within the law.

Nicole asked if we are going to write a letter to VCH saying we are going to continue regardless. Marie clarified that we will not be doing that.

Lynn said it is good to note that this is the preferred approach right now; we are not in a fighting mood and that is the member consensus. Lynn added it is best to stay under the radar and continue to disseminate our grassroots information. She thanked the members for their feedback.

Brochures

Nicole had a comment regarding our brochures; she teaches at the Canadian School of Natural Nutrition, and they say you cannot use the words “disease”, “cure”, or refer to treating a disease. Marie responded that we are aware of that and we tried to word the brochure accordingly. Lucy said the only use of the word “cure” in the brochures is in a quote from Hahnemann. Nicole responded that she wanted to ask about the wording since we are such hot potatoes right now. Lucy said those brochures were first printed two years ago and we have not received any complaints regarding the wording.

Susan said when she was trained as a pharmacist, she was taught that no one can advertise a cure, even among the pharmaceutical industry. Nicole said she is concerned that our brochures list diseases. Susan noted the brochures say we are giving remedies that can aid in these situations; however, we could run it by our lawyer to confirm the wording.

Roland said he is not worried about our brochures; our websites would likely be the focus of scrutiny. Marie responded that you can never know who will walk into your office and see a brochure. Susan felt it would be a good idea to check the wording on the brochures, and we can do that.

**** Action Item** – The Board to ensure the wording on the brochures is legal.

Hardcopy Directory

Lynn said she received a suggestion from a member; it was suggested that we distribute a paper copy of our member list. Nicole said the CSH has one on their site. Marie responded that we have a member listing on our website, and asked what we would do with a paper copy. Nicole noted the CSH mails out a directory of their members each year. Nathalie said this directory would indicate who the other members are. Roland asked if we could just list the members on our website.

Marie clarified that a member list is already on our website; however, we could create a downloadable PDF version of the list. Christy noted that we only have 55 members. Marie said we could add the member list into the membership renewal packages next year; for now, we could post the downloadable PDF version online.

**** Action Item** – The Board to create a downloadable PDF version of the member list and post it online.

6. Election

Marie reported her term is up as President, but she is willing to retain the same position for the next 2 years if re-elected. Christy motioned to have Marie stay on and elected for another term as President.

Majority vote determined Marie re-elected as President.

The term was also up for Susan as Treasurer, Lucy as Communications Secretary, and

Lynn as Director. Anyone wanting to take on any one of their positions could step forward; however they were each happy to retain the same position for the next 2 years if re-elected. The group expressed their appreciation for the Board's work this year; Susan, Lucy, and Lynn were each re-elected in their roles.

Majority vote determined Susan, Lucy, and Lynn each re-elected in their roles.

Marie said anyone else willing to step forward and join the board is welcome to step forward. Susan noted we are a very small group as a Board, and we would love help. Lynn reported Faiqa has now decided to volunteer on the Board; Lynn nominated Faiqa as a Director and she agreed. The Board thanked Faiqa for volunteering.

Majority vote determined Faiqa elected as a Director.

Marie reported we have been working well as a Board; she thanked Susan, Lucy, Lynn and Christy for their hard work. Marie also thanked Sabrina for taking Minutes and looking after the website.

Lynn noted that we have streamlined some processes by moving them online; as a result, the workload for the Membership Secretary has decreased and Christy has been able to continue in that capacity. The Board thanked Christy for her many, many hours of work this year. Christy said her role will be even easier now that we have changed how the CEUs are recorded.

The members thanked the Board for their work this year. Marie said the Board is always happy to hear from the membership.

Lucy added, if the members have any events coming up, or if they have an article they would like to share, they are to contact the Board and Sabrina will post it to our website. Nicole asked what type of articles we would like online. Marie said there is a lot of space available for articles on Homeopathy; we would also like to post articles on general health.

Nicole asked if all of the BC Homeopathic groups are in the Canada-wide group. Marie responded that yes, all BC groups are in it; however, she missed the first meeting as their email invitation didn't reach her. She will be attending the next meeting.

7. Meeting Adjourned

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:04pm.