



BC Society of Homeopaths
AGM Meeting Minutes
April 2, 2016

In Attendance:

Marie Lamey, President
Susan Forbes, Treasurer
Lucy De Pieri, Communications
Sabrina Foldi, Secretary
Lynn Mackay, Director
Colin Gillies, Member
Shahrokh Khaze, Member
Roland Guenther, Member
Nathalie Allen, Member
Andrew Runciman (non-member)

Absent:

Satyendra Rawat, Membership Secretary
Faiqa Riaz, Director

1. Acceptance of Minutes and Financial Reports from last AGM held Mar. 28/15

Marie reported the Minutes and Financial Reports from our last AGM have been posted on the Members Section of our website. There being no changes, Lynn moved to accept the Minutes and Lucy seconded.

2. Review of Last Year's Activities

Marie reported as of March 26th we have 52 members. However, some members have renewed their memberships since that date. Some members left the Society as they have either moved out of town or no longer have one of their offices in BC.

Website and Online Forms

Marie reported this year one of our main focuses was integrating forms into our website. We had been using Adobe Forms until June 2015. At that time Adobe discontinued their forms service; as a result, we received assistance from our web designer in installing a plugin which integrated forms into our website. We paid a one-time cost for this plug-in.

Another addition to our website is a newsletter plugin which notifies our members about website update or additions, such as new event postings. Sign-up instructions were emailed to our members.

We also have new domain names, www.bchomeopathy.com and www.bchomeopathy.ca, which link to our website.

Marie added we encourage members to regularly visit the website, see the new additions, ensure their directory listing is correct, make sure they can log into the Members Section, and let us know of any improvements or additions they would like to see on the site.

Amalgamation Meetings

In March 2015 Marie reported we were made aware that NUPATH and 3CH had initiated talks involving an amalgamation of the provincial organizations to form a Canadian Association. Marie has been attending the meetings, which have been held monthly by telephone conference call.

NUPATH initially proposed that it and the provincial organizations legally dissolve and re-create under this new Canadian Association. None of the provinces were interested in dissolving their organizations. Then, the discussions focused on creating “a national body to include all parties interested in the advancement of Homeopathy in Canada”.

These meetings were monopolized by NUPATH and 3CH. It seemed NUPATH wanted this national body to be an umbrella organization of their own members; they hoped it would include not only practitioners, but also consumers, schools, and pharmacies, such as the Homeopathic Pharmaceutical Association. However, each of these have different mandates. Marie felt there is no point in having another organization in which the provinces are not included.

Now only Homeopaths representing the provinces have been present at the meetings, though they want to include more. Marie is adamant these other groups not be a part of a professional association. Marie added this organization wants to include consumers as members most likely because Karen Wehrstein is their moderator; Karen is not only on the board for NUPATH, but also 3CH, the consumer organization. Marie said she feels NUPATH lost a large number of members due to the regulation of Homeopathy in Ontario; as a result, NUPATH needs to dissolve; they don't have enough members.

Each person in this amalgamation group was to propose a structure for the national body. However, some people did not participate in this task. The manner in which the meetings proceeded indicated this national body would unfortunately be no different from NUPATH's current structure. We proposed the members of the provincial organizations pay a small increase in dues and this money would go to the Canadian Association; in this way, the provincial members are also members of the Canadian Association. This structure would allow the provinces to keep their members and also support the Canadian Association.

In January 2016 we withdrew from the calls. In February, Susan participated in the meeting as an observer. In March, both Susan and Lynn participated. We are considering participating again as we would like to ensure NUPATH does not continue to monopolize the discussion and the creation of this association. At the end of May, a meeting will be held in-person in Toronto to determine the structure of the new association. A professor at the University of Windsor School of Business will be facilitating this meeting as a project for his graduating students.

This meeting will be a neutral playing field. Marie said she feels it is important to have an organization to represent Homeopaths to the government and Health Canada, especially since Health Canada has recently made decisions that do not represent Homeopathy. We need a national organization bring us together and speak for us. This type of organization needs to express our mandate.

Name Change Proposal

Prompted by the discussions of creating the Canadian Association, we emailed our members to ask for their feedback on changing our name from a Society to an Association. We gave four options to members (a) The BC Homeopathic Association, (b) The BC Association of Homeopaths, (c) The BC Homeopaths Association or (d) No name change. The result was essentially a 3-way tie between (a), (b) and (d).

The procedure to change our name is to request approval for our name choice from the BC Registry, then schedule a meeting with our members, and then file a Copy of Resolution form with a \$50 fee. The meeting with our members can be either an AGM or a General Special Meeting where we must pass a special resolution to change our name.

HANS

Marie reported our advertising in the HANS magazine and directory give us great exposure for our members and provides us with various opportunities. One such opportunity is our presence at their Natural Wellness Career Fair. However, this year, we decided not to participate as the VHA was not available to share the costs.

Another opportunity was the HANS Mind Alive Conference – Exploring Natural Medicine for Mental Health, which Lucy attended. However, their list of speakers did not seem to fully represent what natural medicine can offer; the list only included two medical doctors, three naturopaths, one doctor of TCM, and one life coach/therapist. After the conference, we contacted HANS to let them know we would like them to include Homeopathy in the next conference.

In December, the new HANS Director of Operations, Michael Volker, invited us to attend a meeting of natural health organizations. The meeting was held at the end of January 2016 and focused on identifying our common challenges as natural health practitioners and discussing how we could work together to overcome them. The outcome of this meeting was priorities were identified, and the main priority was public awareness. Everyone planned to meet again in March, where they will focus on

brainstorming how to work together and improve public awareness and media coverage of natural therapies.

Marie will be involved in the HANS meetings and Susan and Lynn will be focusing on the Canadian Meetings. The Board will keep the membership updated.

Transfer of Membership Secretary Duties

Marie reported Christy left her position as Membership Secretary in June. In August, Satyendra Rawat took on this role. Shortly after, he went to India and returned two days ago. Marie has streamlined the Membership Secretary duties and worked out the kinks in the processes. In Satyendra's absence, Susan and Marie have taken on the Membership duties.

Liability Insurance Coverage for Members

In June, we looked into the CSH's member insurance coverage. We discovered they have group coverage and this is the difference between their coverage and ours. It is important to note that with group coverage, if a member uses it, less coverage is then available to everyone else in the group for the rest of the year. This is considered to be a lesser type of insurance than ours and it explains why their insurance costs less than ours.

We now have two options for Liability Insurance coverage for our members, AC&D Insurance Services and Holman Insurance Brokers Ltd. This information has been posted in the Members Section of our website and in our members handbook.

Insurance Coverage for Member Services

In August, our Society was accepted by ClaimSecure as an approved unregulated paramedical association. This is great news. We are in the process of applying to Greenshield and we will continue to apply to other insurance companies as well. We will notify our members of any updates.

Marie also reported that Manulife will now cover the services of our members. However, we must note that they can only accept a paper claim and mailing of an original receipt. We recommend that members write their membership number on the receipt; if their number is less than 4 digits, zeros should be added in front of the number so that their number is 4 digits long. It is important to note that patients are responsible for confirming that their plan covers or includes homeopathy. It is the patient's employer who chooses the plan. We also encourage patients to let their employer know they would like Homeopathy coverage on their extended medical plans.

Society Act changes

In May, our lawyer notified us of some major changes coming to the Society Act. He outlined the possible implications these changes could have for our Society and suggested we consolidate our bylaw changes into one document. Susan completed this work in August. By October 1st, we may need to hold a special meeting for our members to approve the new bylaws. The new Society Act comes into force on November 28th. We will keep the members updated.

Member Handbook

Marie reported that there have been many new added services for our members in the last few years; she would like to note them in one place, especially for new members. She will email the Member Handbook to the membership once it is complete.

Closure of VHA

The VHA closed in September. As a result, we researched other education options and posted a list of schools on our website.

Memorial for Iain Marrs

Our dear friend and mentor, Iain Marrs passed away. We organized a memorial for him in November. The video of his memorial will be posted on our website once the file size has been reduced.

At this year's conference, we are hosting a silent auction for books donated by Caroline Dent and the VHA. The proceeds from this auction will go to the Institute for Cross-cultural Exchange, a children's literacy organization for which Iain volunteered.

Mentorship Program

As we were busy with many initiatives this year, this item was not addressed. However, we recognize a mentorship program would be a great benefit to our new members, especially since the VHA has now closed. We would like to create a directory of mentors for our website's Members Only section. We ask that our members contact the Board if they would like to be a mentor.

Newsgroup and Communications

Lucy has decided to step down as Communications Director. She has been a very important part of the Board and we have appreciated her passion and dedication to Homeopathy. We are now looking for someone to take on this role.

3. Discussion of the Progress of the Formation of a Unified Canadian Association

Marie said she contacted the Nurses, Chiropractors, Naturopaths, as well as other healthcare professionals to determine how their organizations are structured. The Naturopathic organization told her it has its own membership; the Naturopaths do not have to be members of a provincial organization.

Nathalie, who is a Naturopath, said the Naturopaths have a national organization who speaks for them. Naturopaths also have their own college and their membership with the provincial group, the BCNA, is optional. The BCNA supports the practitioners, and they are automatically members of the national organization. For example, Nathalie pays two fees, but she is a member of three associations. Susan, who was a pharmacist, said this was the structure for pharmacists as well: it was mandatory to be licensed by the College of Pharmacists of B.C., while the BCPA provided professional support for pharmacists in B.C. as did the CPA at the national level.

Nathalie asked if a lawyer would be present at the in-person meeting in May. Susan said only the professor and his grad students are joining the meeting. Nathalie said this group is not seeing the conflict of interest in Karen representing the two organizations. Marie agreed and added the Ontario group wants to forge ahead and make it happen no matter what. She said, luckily, the representative from the SPHQ (Syndicat Professionnel des Homéopathes du Québec) has been constantly pulling them back, trying to slow them down.

Shahrokh said he is hearing we want to model the structure of other healthcare practitioners. However, he feels Homeopathy has started a new paradigm and a new life experience. Given what the other models have been in the past, he questioned why we want to model something from a different paradigm. We are placing ourselves into an outdated system and fitting ourselves into a mold created by some other entity. He questioned the value in engaging in these discussions. He said he hopes to see unity in the Homeopathic community, everywhere; we should emphasize creating that unified vision of Homeopathy. Otherwise, we would be doing a disservice to the practice. We should put the differences aside and see what the commonalities are among everyone.

Shahrokh noted there is already a national society. He wondered if this Canadian Association would be the same as that one, or if it is in opposition to that one. We are divided and he would like to discuss how to unify. He wondered how we could come to some understanding so we avoid blindly following a path. This national group seems like the societies who have failed in the past in respect to the Homeopathic discipline and in respect to the public.

Marie noted one of the things mentioned at the beginning of these talks was the goal of being all-inclusive. They invited everyone to join them, the CSH, the WCHS, colleges, as well as groups. People have dropped off since then, stating this national group was not in their interest. To be all-inclusive, NUPATH wants to create this organization that would oversee everything; they imagined it would have standards of practice, etc. However, Marie felt to do that from west to east is challenging and we should leave the standards of practice to the provinces. This organization should not handle how we practice Homeopathy. This organization should be our singular voice to interact with the federal government and the media. It could deal with the CBC, lawsuits, and our press releases. We could also use it to share resources.

Susan noted we are not forming this organization to become part of something; we are doing it because we have to engage with the other parties Marie mentioned. We have to engage collectively for our purposes of promoting Homeopathy.

Shahrokh said the end does not justify the means. Based on what the government is doing, we will never win. The government is meant to serve the people; but now, the government is serving itself. For us to engage in that process is self-defeating. Susan wondered how far we should let the government go in doing that. For example, they are putting labelling requirements on remedies and these requirements do not make sense.

Shahrokh said only money speaks. The pharmaceutical companies and the insurance companies are pouring money into the government. We need to look at different ways of approaching this issue. We need to try to affect the system from the grassroots; we cannot play their game. Shahrokh added the energy of this engagement feels anti-Homeopathic. Even discussions in the media defending Homeopathy end up working against us; we are devaluing Homeopathy by engaging in the same strategies and framework that created this problem. We need to be more Homeopathic in this process and we need to be more inclusive instead of creating separate camps.

Marie said she feels it is important to have clear mandates. The Homeopathic Pharmaceutical Association did not want to participate because it had its own mandate; this Canadian Association was not in their interest. It is important this national group promotes Homeopathy and we will pool our resources to make that happen. We agree we need to work at a grassroots level, but there has to be some element which deals with the government and the media. We need to do both.

Lynn said Shahrokh has made very good points and we have discussed them in great detail in the past. She agreed we work with energetic medicine and our process should reflect that. However, we have to find the right time to work in that manner. Recently, a great deal has happened in Ontario's Homeopathic community. Lynn felt it has been a challenge for Homeopathy to operate in a new paradigm both individually as well as in groups. The Ontario Ministry of Health regulated Homeopathy because people wanted it; they had the votes. We have some provinces with small populations; they may not be able to come up with enough votes to affect such change, so we want to be able to represent them. Lynn added she would emphasize this unifying factor at the meeting.

Lucy said media people have wanted to talk to her and they want a response quickly. Though she has felt she should say something, she is not prepared to do so and does not want it to be a battle. Therefore, she passes it to the Board, who have concluded it is best to ignore the media's request. However, we should have enough of a force to not only ignore it, but also put forward our own agenda. The other people should not drive us. We have to find a way to create a good team. Roland said Homeopaths are very individualistic; it is difficult to get us together and have us agree on something. However, he appreciates our attempts at doing that.

Andrew said the biggest obstacle for him in establishing a new practice is that insurance companies are not recognizing Homeopathy. People are using only the modalities covered in their benefits. In theory, some insurance companies cover Homeopathy; but he hasn't yet seen that. Lynn agreed insurance is part of the problem.

It was mentioned there has always been more than one organization. NUPATH has been around longer than the CSH. Susan noted NUPATH's focus has been the east.

Roland said it is difficult for authorities to recognize us if we are so new. In addition, they only recognize large numbers of people and we will never have a great deal of money behind us. Our goal should be getting people together. The more organizations

there are, the less chances there are for us to come together. Marie said we need to pool together our resources and expertise as well. For example, others have online videos, and perhaps we could use those too.

Nathalie commented on the concept of working with a new paradigm which is Homeopathic; she questioned whether we need a new organization. In the 90's, there was talk of this subject in Quebec and she was considering the approach of anticipating the enemy, stepping out of the room, not confronting the attack. Nathalie added that when we do not have the numbers we could still function as an underground network. When our numbers climb then we would get more attention. Roland said there would be more regulation when we get more attention. Nathalie said people would want to impose their model on us too. If that happened, we would then have to come up with something. She wondered if we could create a network instead of an association. Marie said Karen's reason for wanting to create an association instead of a network was that the government does not talk to networks.

Nathalie wondered if we could pool our resources but divide our skills. In this way, only the head of the group responds. Marie said Karen and Sushila Lalsingh (NUPATH) have already decided to go ahead with their idea. Susan agreed and said they are really pushing ahead. Susan said the question is whether we join them and whether we have some say in what they are creating. Marie said everyone but the practitioners and NUPATH has now dropped out.

Nathalie said several groups would mean several heads, but then there could be a pool that could be used when there is a national issue. Roland said, instead of blocking their initiative and trying to do something separate, it would be better to contribute to the initiative.

Susan said if the idea of this group works, there would be momentum gathering. We are in a different place in history now and we are more above ground than before. We do not see this national group as a regulatory body. The CSH formed to model what was in the US at the time. However, this organization would not be like that.

Shahrokh said, when we create an entity to deal with the government, the government can use that to start regulating. Susan said these organizations have come together in a teleconference with Health Canada, who is actually open to making changes to the labels. At this stage in Canadian health history, the regulatory aspects on Homeopathy are still quite circumscribed; Susan said she could not imagine that changing. She sees hints of increased regulations that do not accurately reflect homeopathic practice.

Shahrokh said he believes if there is an open forum for discussion, then it would be good to be involved in it. He would like to pool everyone into this discussion. It is the consumer's right to choose their healthcare; it is not up to the government to regulate it. Shahrokh questioned how someone knows his/her practitioner is experienced in Homeopathy. If the practitioner does not know what he/she is doing, they will not be able to do it for long. The government cannot control whom people go to for their health

problems. We should not worry about fighting to promote Homeopathy; if people are allowed to make their own choices, the best modality will emerge. If it works, it will stand the test of time. These attacks are entrapping us into a system that will either be dismissed or controlled. We are engaged in power struggles over who decides what; this is not a healthy way of presenting a healing art. He added the insurance entities, not us, have a voice because they fund the government.

Susan said the government does not listen to medical personnel either. Shahrokh said his home insurance was declined because his Homeopathic practice is based out of his home. However, the government does not even recognize Homeopathy as a health practice. Somehow, we have to engage people in a common understanding.

Andrew said we are not an ally of the pharmaceutical companies because they are not interested in health and we are not peddling their products. We are not in a fight with them; we have a non-relationship. We each have nothing the other wants.

Lucy said she used to work for a pharmaceutical company; they just want to make money. This is the reason malaria still exists; third world countries do not have enough money to attract the interest of the pharmaceutical companies. With the word “industry” in “health industry”, it cannot be focused on health; it is instead about industry. If we have momentum from a large number of Homeopaths at the same time, we could have ads on TV. Shahrokh said, we could put ads on TV, but the others have more money than us to put ads on TV discrediting us. Lucy said we would not be competing; we would be saying we are here too.

Lynn said it is good to have this conversation and it is good for the Board to hear this.

**** Action Items** - Lynn to emphasize unification at the upcoming in-person meeting.

4.Item for Vote – Increase in Membership Fees

Marie reported we discussed a potential increase in membership fees at last year’s AGM. Now, if our Society is joining a Canadian Association and expecting to put money towards it, a portion of each member’s dues must go towards it. In addition, engaging in promotional work with HANS will cost us money.

Shahrokh asked what our fees currently go towards. Susan replied the original purpose for our fees was to cover the cost of regulation and Title Protection. Those are no longer viable, but we still have this money. We currently have \$23,000 in our account and we may need it in the future. Susan felt we should wait until we need the money, and increase our fees at that time. We currently do not have any plans for the money we have saved. We thought of investing but never got to it.

Shahrokh asked how many Homeopaths are in BC. Marie replied the Board did a membership drive last year; we each focused on a particular region and then searched online for Homeopaths in that region. We discovered there were roughly 100 Homeopaths here. Shahrokh asked why our Society only has 52 members. Susan replied

there are a few reasons for this: there are two organizations in BC, the BCSH and the WCHS. Some Homeopaths do not belong to either organization, and some are only members of the CSH and not the BCSH; there is a sense of a division. Marie added some Homeopaths have moved to BC and don't even know we exist.

Shahrokh said it is not clear whether our fees are an obstacle or not. Susan felt the cost of membership is an obstacle. Also, some think they receive more benefits through the CSH. Shahrokh suggested we decrease the fees to see if we get more members. Susan said some feel they have more benefits with their CSH membership because of its relationship to the CCH. Lucy said our fees are covering the legal expenses involved in our work with the Society Act. Susan agreed and said our lawyer is excellent. The Board agreed.

Nathalie asked if we have a savings account. Susan said we only have a chequing account where we receive free cheques. Nathalie recommended we put some money into ING Direct; with them, she has made \$9 with her \$1000 savings in only three months.

Shahrokh said we need to determine if people are actually receiving more benefits with their CSH membership; if they are, we should be able to provide the same. Susan said we are working on that. Marie said one issue is insurance; the CSH has a group insurance plan. However, we found that plan is not in the best interest of the practitioner. Marie wondered if they are attracted to the CSH because they receive Canadian-wide exposure. This new national organization will give us that as well. We are making changes in those directions.

Nathalie asked if an increase in our fees would be in preparation for donating to that new association that doesn't yet exist. Marie agreed and said they will indeed be forming; they have approved of the name, they have wanted it up for vote this year, and it will likely be up and running by the end of the year.

Nathalie asked who would be in charge of the money they receive. Susan said we do not know that yet; they are currently focusing on creating the group's structure. Marie added we would like one representative per province.

Regarding our fees, Marie noted our last fee increase was six years ago. We have enough money, but we have been wanting to keep aside a good amount for emergencies. Now we are focusing more into promotional activities and that could cost money.

We had proposed three options for an increase in membership fees, a \$20 increase, a \$10 increase, or no increase. A vote determined:

- \$20 increase vote resulted in 3 for and 5 against
- \$10 increase vote resulted in 0 for and 8 against
- No increase vote resulted in 5 for and 3 against

Majority vote determined there will be no increase in our Membership Fees this year.

Marie noted this topic would be added to next year's agenda.

Shahrokh wondered if we could try decreasing the fees for just one year to see what happens. Susan replied, if we did that, we would then have to spend money to cover the promotion saying “we have decreased our fees and please join us”. Shahrokh asked if people are not joining our Society because of our fees. Marie said the fees are an issue if the person is in more than one organization. Susan said if people are with the CCH and the CSH, the fees get expensive. Shahrokh then asked if people would join us if we decreased our fees. Susan wondered how we would know the answer to that. Marie said she does not think our fees are unreasonably high. Lynn wondered if we could ask people why they are not joining us. Susan agreed and suggested we do a poll; we could contact the people on our membership drive list and ask what would entice them to join an organization.

Andrew said he joined the CSH because they replied to him first; he also found he could finish his cases, get them reviewed, and then get registered quickly. He is in a little town and he felt it would take a long time for him to complete forty cases in order to be registered with the BCSH. Lynn said some members have said our communication was more direct than that of other associations, but it’s good to know what Andrew experienced.

Marie said one thing we have not done is give our members a designation, but there is a reason for that. We do, however, have categories of membership, where we are clear someone is a registered member. However, if we are not a regulated profession, we cannot use the terms “registered, licensed, certified, regulated”. As a result, we have only given our members a membership category. This means it is illegal for a Homeopath to call themselves a “Registered Homeopath”, as they do when they join the CSH. Andrew said, however, the patient wants to be helped by the “registered member”, the member with the highest level of membership.

Marie said we considered trademarking a name, but that got put by the wayside. Andrew said trademarking the name would be expensive and hard to enforce.

Shahrokh noted our cash flow chart shows our expenses for the case conference were less than the income. He felt a nonprofit society should break even. Also, he felt the ticket price was high for a 1.5-day conference. He wondered why the price was so high if our expenses were so low. As well, we had only 27 members attend our conference and only ten attend the AGM. He wondered if this was something we should look at. Susan said it is a gamble each year. Roland said we shouldn’t make our fees or the conference price too cheap; the cost should relate to the value.

Andrew suggested we have a guest presenter next year and we cover their expenses. Susan said that is a possibility and we have done that before. Shahrokh suggested we change the bylaws to state we give our members a rebate if we make too much of a profit. Susan replied it may be that last year’s conference expenses were covered by the previous year. However, in her computer she has the cost for each year, and so she could look into this if needed.

Shahrokh said he agrees with a rebate towards next year's membership. That would be similar to doing dividends for a corporation. Susan replied we need to add to our resources. Shahrokh said only the ten people here know that fact. Susan replied anyone could read this information on our website.

Lynn said she appreciates we have the opportunity to look at things differently, and do things differently. There is a lot to consider from this discussion. Marie said these things would have to be voted on next year.

Roland said he feels uneasy because it seems like people are just focusing on what they can get out of something. If this is the only question people are asking, it's a very poor question; the quality of a relationship is based on "what can I put into it?" He said he does not want to have members who are only wanting something out of their membership with us. He also does not like the idea of making everything cheap and easy.

Marie said it would be great to see everyone in-person, especially since we practice in isolation. We also have other forums like the newsgroup, where we can share remedies, ideas, and resources.

Lynn said, in the past, we looked into arranging accommodations for conference attendees; we also thought about holding a retreat, and we could revisit those ideas. Susan said we used to meet for a meal over the conference weekend as well.

Roland said each society lives on how much connection they have. It would be a good idea to hold a retreat. Susan noted we had logistical issues when we last thought of holding a retreat. Marie added it was at Naramata; she asked Roland if he could suggest other locations. Roland said he would think about it and get back to her.

Shahrokh asked if the charge for the website is yearly. Susan replied we pay \$200-300 each year. Our web operator retired so we have been paying our web designer to help us when we run into web problems. We have also been paying for our domain name and web site hosting.

****Action Items:**

- Marie to add the topic, Increasing Membership Fees, to next year's agenda.
- Roland to suggest locations for a retreat Case Conference.

5. Discussion of Changing the Name of the Society to an Association

Marie noted an association is a society of health professionals. The name "association" brings a society to a higher level. If we were an association, we would be more inline with the other health professions. We reserved the other site names in case we change our name. Shahrokh asked if that was the reason .com and .ca were used. He felt nonprofit organizations have a wider reputation when they use .org. Marie replied the original website used .ca. Susan said we can look at these issues if we change our name.

6. Discussion of the Need for a Trained Public Spokesperson and Discussion of Media and Public Awareness

Marie reported Lucy has been receiving a large number of emails and phone calls requesting a same-day response. She is busy, and the rest of us are busy as well; it is very difficult to prepare an appropriate response in time. Ideally, we could refer these callers to the Canadian Association; we could have someone there as our public spokesperson.

We haven't done any public interviews or responded to these media inquiries, but now we are at the point where we need to respond. Marie wasn't sure if anyone here would be comfortable talking to the media. Lorna Hancock of HANS said she feels badly for us because there is something bad in the media each day about Homeopathy.

Susan said we looked into this spokesperson issue a few years ago. She wondered if we could fulfill this role. Lynn said one of the hopes for the Canadian group is that they can act as a spokesperson for us. Our Board members are unable to take on that role.

Andrew said the trick is to not get into the battle with the media. A spokesperson should just provide the statement we want to give. He/she should turn the negative into a positive. Roland said a spokesperson would have special skills in this area which we as practitioners do not have. We should get someone who would be a good spokesperson. Marie suggested we wait and see what happens with the Canadian group.

7. Discussion of Combination Remedies – Use in Practice and Society's Standing

Lucy said she has had a number of patients come to her after seeing an ND who gave them a large number of combination remedies. These cases have been very difficult to treat; in one case she had to make a homeopathic remedy out of the combination remedy to get the patient out of their state. Lucy said she feels the whole point of being a Homeopath is to give one remedy, at a low dose, at a time. As a Society we should make a stand that we do not endorse combination remedies. Lucy felt it's up to our members to decide if they want to use these remedies; but as a Society, she would like us to state we do not endorse it.

Andrew asked if a member of the BCSH had been using combination remedies. Lucy said it was someone who recently joined. Roland said that people cannot call themselves Homeopaths if they operate this way, giving combination remedies. Even the finest Homeopaths, like Vithoulkas have given up on cases like that. Roland said he is very opinionated about this. He believes patients who have been given combination remedies will not benefit from other classical remedies.

Nathalie said these people are using remedies in a non-Homeopathic way. She wondered if we could state we do not endorse Homeotherapeutics and then explain our reasoning; it is because Homeotherapeutics do not follow the Law of Similars. Susan asked how we would state that. Nathalie said we could place the statement online for now.

Lucy noted this patient was proving the symptoms of the remedies in the combination remedy. Nathalie said if the remedy is not given according to the Law of Similars, it is

not Homeopathy. Susan said she has no disagreement about that. The issue is people who apply for membership may fit the requirements, but use combination remedies in their practice. We cannot deny them membership; we are not regulated and we have no means of policing how they practice. Andrew said we don't have to renew their membership. Susan replied we have a relationship with them built on trust. We want to promote the education of the professional Homeopath. Nathalie noted we sign a Code of Ethics. Susan added we also have a Standards of Practice.

Sharaokh said it is not good for us to take on policing, but we could state on our website that we do not take responsibility for any member. We could have that as a disclaimer.

Susan said the latest trend is the use of a machine that indicates what remedy the patient needs. We like to explore and sometimes that includes using new techniques; it is part of who we are. Marie said she would look into wording a disclaimer for our website.

Marie reported Health Canada is pulling the cold, cough and flu combination remedies off the shelves due to labelling issues; they cannot be labeled for use with children. The result of these changes would be a decreased number of products available to the public. We don't disagree with this move because these products should be backed up by studies. Shahrokh said the medical field studies these remedies and sees nothing in them; Boiron and others need to be told they can sell whatever they wish, but that these products are not following Homeopathic theory.

Marie said the other side of this issue is these products have not done any harm. With this in mind, Marie wondered why they they are being removed. Even prior to this there has been an ongoing petition regarding Freedom of Choice in Healthcare put out by the NHPPA.

****Action Item** – Marie to look into wording a disclaimer regarding combination remedies for our website.

8. Election of Board Members

Lucy resigned her position on the Board and the members present were asked if there were any volunteers to fill this position. No volunteers came forward.

9. Meeting Adjourned

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:11pm.