

### **Board of Directors**

Members of the Board of Directors for 2009-2010 were Marie Lamey, Susan Forbes, Julia Mohrs, Lucy De Pieri, and Inge Burger.

### **Report from the Board – Summary of Actions and Events**

The focus this year has been on

- ✓ increasing the benefits of membership
- ✓ increasing membership
- ✓ communication with government
- ✓ intake forms finalized

### **Financial Summary**

A summary of the Society's finances is appended to this report.

### **Members**

Our membership numbers currently stand at:

Registered	27
Resident	16
Student	3
Associate	14
TOTAL	60

### **Students-Graduation Packages**

In order to encourage new membership, for the third year, the VHA provided a list of the graduates for September 2009. Packages were put together that included;

- . A letter of congratulations
- . A BCSH brochure
- . A Code of Ethics
- . A coupon for a discounted membership (resident for the price of student)
- . A list of the benefits of membership
- . A business card holder labeled with "compliments of BCSH"

These packages were personalized and delivered to the graduation ceremony. As a result, 2 new members joined.

## **Students-Introduction and awareness of BCSH**

Lucy and Susan have been speaking with the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> year students of the VHA about the Society, the Case Conference and to encourage new membership.

## **Membership Applications**

The Board has experienced some challenges in this area. We are receiving many applications from practitioners whose background is unknown to us, and thus requires much time and effort to investigate. As a result we have implemented a \$25.00 application fee. This serves us two-fold, in that it helps with the costs of setting up a new member (certificate, mailing, website addition) and also deters membership lapses. Since our fees are low compared to other Societies, this one time set up fee is not unreasonable.

## **HANS**

We renewed our membership with HANS again this year, as a means to increase the exposure of our membership directory to the public. Opportunities still exist to have articles written about Homeopathy, as well as patient testimonials and events. Our continued support of this organization may prove to be useful in the future in dealing with government issues.

## **Website**

Three more things that have been added to the website this year were:

### **Petition to Support our Application for Regulation:**

This printable version is available to all members to collect signatures in support of our Application to be a Designated Health Profession under the Health Professions Act. We encourage people to mail them in as they are completed so the Society has them on hand to use as needed. There is no deadline for these petitions at this time.

### **Link to HPA:**

This link provides one click access to the Ministry of Health Legislation webpage for BCSH members (and other website users) to have an up-to-date look at what changes are happening with the Health Professions Act.

### **Link to OIPC:**

This link provides one click access to the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner so that members are aware and have access to information regarding the Personal Information Protection Act (PIPA).

The “Member Bio” link is still available on the directory but is very under utilized at this point. We encourage our members to use it - it is a great

opportunity to increase your visibility in the community, especially if you don't have your own website.

Other areas where the Board would like to see further additions to the website include information about homeopathy for the public. This could be an area for the Board to focus on in the upcoming year. The information could also be used to put together brochures on specific topics/conditions.

### **Brochures**

Professional brochures for the members have been on the back burner this year due to limited resources of the board members and our focus on other important issues such as regulation.

### **Bulletin**

The Bulletin continues to be a valuable communication tool, to foster community, and a venue for our members to share ideas. Many thanks to Lucy De Pieri for all her hard work in putting together this publication; Iain Marrs and Susan Forbes for proof reading and editing; Inge Burger and Fran Cudlipp for compiling the Events calendar. The frequency of the Bulletin is such that it is produced only when there is enough material. This will remain the case unless there is more consistent contribution from the members.

### **Newsgroup**

The Newsgroup continues to provide the members with means of instant communication and we thank those of you who have joined, participated and given feedback.

### **Case Conference**

We have continued to organize this annual event for the members and profession. Fostering community and celebrating the excellent quality of practitioners we have in BC. We look forward to continuing this event in future years, and thank all who have participated whether as presenters or attendees. We hope to continue this event for many years to come.

### **NHPD**

In November we were contacted by Health Canada to invite us to a meeting regarding the NHPD backlog and the problems they have been facing with the Natural Health Products applications. Outlining updates to the application process that has been streamlined for more efficiency. Marie was able to attend one day of the two day workshop. There was not much that applied to us as practitioners, and as the second day was an instructional workshop for filling out new product applications, it was not attended. The

full presentation was emailed to all attendees in a power point presentation, and is available to anyone who wants it emailed to them.

### **Intake Forms**

The Intake Forms have been completed and distributed to our members. They are available in PDF format. These generic, Board-approved forms are available to any member. A lawyer was hired in October 2009 to review the “Terms of Acceptance”, “Consent to Treatment” and “General Consent” forms. The final drafts of these documents from the lawyer were sent to the Board and accepted in November 2009. The final PDF version was completed in January 2010 and emailed to members in February.

The feedback we have received is very positive and we will continue to make improvements to the forms over the course of the next year. Specifically, such things as adding a space for an email address, making the file sizes smaller, and being able to fill in the forms electronically.

### **BCSH Privacy Policy**

This issue arose during our first meeting with the lawyer. She advised us, as a Society, collecting personal information from our members, to have a Privacy Policy in place to comply with the Office of the Privacy Commissioner. A Privacy Policy has been drafted by the Board and a copy is attached. As well, it will be posted on our website for all of our current and prospective members to view.

She also advised each practitioner to have their own Privacy Policy available for their patients or any other person they are collecting personal information from. The guideline for creating your own Privacy Policy is available on the website link to the OIPC.

### **Application for Designation**

The status of our application one year ago was the Ministry of Health still had our application on file but they had been busy updating the Health Professions Act for the existing professions. We were informed this would be completed by the end of the summer 2009, and we would be contacted and informed as to what we needed to do.

By the end of August we had received no information. In early September we again contacted the Ministry of Health by phone and left a message for the Health Minister, but with no reply. An email was sent at the end of September to the office of the Ministry of Health, again with no response. The lawyer we had contacted offered to communicate with the Ministry of Health on our behalf, and the Board agreed this would be the most effective

way to find out what was happening with our application, and to determine what we needed to do to facilitate the process.

In January 2010 the lawyer informed us they had finally received a response from the Ministry of Health regarding our application, and the details of this communication were emailed to all members on January 24, 2010.

Essentially, the Ministry of Health has decided that no new applications for designation under the HPA will be entertained at this time. The Ministry appears to consider the designation of homeopaths under the HPA not to be required to protect the public, and something that would more likely tend to benefit the homeopaths from a marketing/economic perspective. They are not prepared to designate health professions on this basis.

However, the lawyer did suggest that we might, as an alternative, pursue an application for **Occupational Title Protection** under the Society Act. She also pointed out that some proposed revisions to section 52.1 of the Health Professions Act may affect many Homeopaths using the CCH and RSHom designations. When and if s. 52.1 of the HPA comes into force as it is written, it would have the effect of disallowing homeopaths (and others) from using the terms "regulated", "registered", "licensed" or "certified" in relation to their practice in B.C. unless specifically entitled to do so under regulation.

Upon further investigation into applying for Occupational Title Protection, we discovered that the application requires the occupational title requested to begin with the word "Registered". This is in direct conflict with the proposed changes to s 52.1. The Society Act falls under the Ministry of Finance so we spoke with them regarding this dilemma. We were told that a different title could be chosen but there would have to be clear reasons why and it would have to be investigated by their department. The cost for an application is \$300.00 and the current wait for an application is 3 years. We also do not have everything in place to apply at this time, namely **CEU, Standards of Practice and Membership Exam**, so there is some work that has to be done if we decide to pursue this. An outline of the Occupational Title Protection is attached.

### **Section 52.1 Repercussions**

After considering the full impact of the proposed changes to this clause in the Health Professions Act, we have contacted the BC Association of Kinesiologists, the Association of Reflexology and the Health Action Network Society, and are in the process of contacting other CAM practitioners who will be affected by this. It is our goal to have an impact on changing the wording of this clause so that it does not come into force as it is currently written.

The repercussions of this affect a large number of CAM practitioners. The definition of a health professional in the HPA is as follows:

**"health profession"** means a profession in which a person exercises skill or judgment or provides a service related to (a) the preservation or improvement of the health of individuals, or (b) the treatment or care of individuals who are injured, sick, disabled or infirm;

This includes all types of CAM including reflexology, aromatherapy, reiki, even yoga, and many others. For many of these professions, as in Homeopathy, there are required training programs and standards that must be met in order to practice. Kinesiology is a Bachelors Degree program at the University level, and there is a yoga school that offers a "Registered Training Program" through PCTIA (Private Career Training Institute Agency of BC).

We do agree that the use of the word "Registered" should be reserved for regulated professions; however, the effect of restricting the use of the term "Certified" takes the credibility away from someone who has fulfilled the requirements of a legitimate training program. How will the public be able to distinguish between someone who has taken a weekend course and someone who has 4 years of training? It is about competency. To be more helpful, the HPA could, for example, stipulate that "Certified" could be used if there were a certain number of training hours, or that it be a recognized school, etc.

The other effect that might occur is that, for example, an RMT could take a course through the CHEK Institute and call themselves a Certified CHEK practitioner, but someone who was not an RMT who did the exact same course could not. An ND could write the CHC (Council for Homeopathic Certification) exam and use the designation CCH (Certified Classical Homeopath) and a graduate of the VHA who wrote the same exam could not, only because we are not yet a regulated health profession.

With more of the public seeking alternative forms of health care this seems to me to be a very large step backwards in the CAM field, taking away any form of legitimacy we may have in the eyes of the public.

The Board has been very active discussing these issues over the past few months, and invites our members to contribute their ideas to become part of the discussion as we move forward in this area of professional development and credibility.

## **Contact us**

Our continued focus is on membership and the visibility of our members to the public in order to increase growth in our practices and community. If you have any suggestions for the Board, or feedback, please feel free to contact us. We can only do so much so any help is greatly appreciated. Please volunteer your services if any of these projects described above are of interest to you.

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