

AGM 2017

# Executive Director's Report

Thank you for the opportunity to update you again on some of the activities of Manitoba Psychological Society over the past year and on some of the work that I have been doing on your behalf. MPS continues to have a high percentage of registered psychologists in Manitoba – about 83% this year – and to expand on advocacy efforts and services to Manitoba psychologists.

As I noted last year, MPS actively pursues opportunities to increase access to psychological services, provide more and better services to members, educate the public about the role of psychology and topics related to psychology, and provide excellent continuing education. MPS responds to issues related to mental health via media, participates in national organizations, cooperates with community mental health groups, responds to requests from the community, and explores the needs of diverse groups within that community. We are very pleased to have your continued support in these endeavours.

Since my last report to the general membership, I have attended the twice-yearly Practice Directorate and CPAP meetings, chaired by Dr. Piotrowski, to continue to be involved in national issues and to network and gain ideas from other association representatives.

As well, I have attended twice-yearly meetings of American and Canadian executive directors of psychology associations. These gatherings provide valuable information to assist me in doing my best job for you; they also have served as inspiration for several ideas that I have brought back to MPS and that subsequently were adopted. As your Executive Director, I also attend the annual Practice Leadership Conference in Washington, D.C. Most of the costs for executive directors to attend this meeting are covered by APA.

Monthly on-line meetings with a group of executive directors from small psychology associations also have provided great support and generated ideas in areas ranging from gala organization to continuing education speakers.

As part of our advocacy efforts, I also attended:

- a meeting, along with Dr. Piotrowski, with Bill Thull, of Healthcare Canada, an advocacy expert with extensive government experience, and who was involved in the writing of the current Canada Health Act
- meetings with Dr. Piotrowski and Dr. Jon Gerrard, to advise with respect to Dr. Gerrard's plan to advocate for coverage for psychologists under Manitoba Health
- a meeting, along with Dr. Piotrowski, with Carly Johnston and Nancy Parker of Mental Health and Spiritual Health Care, Health, Seniors and Active Living
- along with Dr. Jo Ann Unger, the CMHA Annual Meeting, at which Kelvin Goertzen, Minister of Health spoke
- a meeting with Ms. Barb Wasilewski of Manitoba Health and Dr. Piotrowski about roles for psychologists in My Health teams.
- a meeting with representatives from the Board to develop strategic inquiry questions
- an informal meeting with Dr. John Service
- A strategic inquiry webinar by Sean Moore of the Ottawa-based Advocacy School (the entire Board later had an in-person workshop with Mr. Moore).
- informal meetings with individuals in government and service agencies who provided advice about advocacy and suggestions for champions in government and the community

I also was pleased to participate in preparation for our 50th Anniversary Gala. Wow! It was a thrill to celebrate this event and our Gala chair, Dr. Jeff Harvey, embraced the idea and made it his own, in the fabulous Mercedes Benz building. We took the opportunity to honour the worthy, and modest, Drs. Bob McIlwraith and Bill Davies, for their considerable influential contributions to psychology. Kudos also to our enthusiastic and organized administrative assistant, Heidi Tucker, without whose help the gala would not have been the same, and to Dr. Greg Gibson and his band, Misty Street, for terrific musical entertainment. It was a pleasant surprise to discover the musical and dancing abilities of some of our Manitoba psychologists!

MPS's excellent continuing education offerings continue to be well-attended. Many thanks to Dr. Lesley Ritchie for her years of providing of organizing top-notch educational workshops (and superb revenue generators) that have been of interest not only to psychologists but also to those of many other disciplines.

Our 2016 AGM and Conference, although not a revenue-generating event, was well-received and well-attended, with 75 registrants. Presenters spoke on self-care, PTSD treatment, and the culture of firefighters, paramedics, and police. We were delighted to have our second-ever Student Poster Competition as well. Thanks to Julie Erickson, our past Student Representative now on internship in Toronto, for organizing the competition.

Our Ethics Consultation Service continues to be available on request to our members. The committee of seasoned and experienced psychologists (Drs. Jaye Miles, Norah Vincent, Don Stewart, Len Greenwood and Bruce Tefft), highlight various considerations and guidelines related to an issue in a more in-depth manner than is likely to be found in a one-on-one consultation with a colleague.

Perhaps one of my most satisfying roles has been to participate in the initiation and development of a Social Action Committee. I brought this initiative to the AGM last year and it was received with enthusiasm by those in attendance. The Committee now has had several meetings and, with Dr. Jennifer Volk as chair, is in the final stages of preparing a draft of policy and procedures, to be considered by the Board. The policy will guide the committee in determining to which issues and events, and in what manner, MPS may

respond or take a position. We thank those who participated in our survey and offered to help in the future, and look forward to your continued feedback.

For 2017, the Board supported an increase in recommended fees, based on a review of fees charged across Canada and on cost-of-living increases in Manitoba. Letters were sent in September to third-party payers to inform them of the upcoming changes but, unfortunately, the processes in some government departments move slowly. There again has been some delay in covering invoices with the new fee and I have had to resend a couple of these letters. Please be reassured that insurers have been informed of the changes in recommended fees well in advance.

Our website has continued to be well used, and Heidi and I field many questions about the services of psychologists that originate from the website. Over the past year, there 21, 871 unique page views to the website; with a high proportion using the Find a Psychologist search engine. We received approximately 150 emailed inquiries, of varying and interesting nature, via the website (in addition to calls to our phone number).

The Board has been pleased to be able to provide more timely updates and readings via the EBlasts that replaced our newsletter. Thanks to Dr. Lisa Thouas and Ms. Maia Kredentser for organizing the EBlasts. We would be pleased to receive your feedback, as well as suggestions for articles or activities of interest to psychologists that we might mention in our EBlasts.

Unlike other associations in Canada, MPS does not have an office. As such, our records are stored in boxes and files in the homes of the E.D. and of some Board members, particularly in the basement of Dr. Greenwood! The Board decided this year to utilize some of the funds we received from the APA CAPP grant last year to digitize our records storage, and our gung-ho and highly capable student representative, Maia Kredentser, has organized some student help to make it happen. This project is on the list to be completed this year.

Thanks to Maia as well for organizing the display of student posters this year.

We will be sad to see Drs. Somers and Ritchie departing this year; they have made invaluable and unique contributions to the work of MPS. We also will say farewell again to Dr. Greenwood, who, although contemplating the peace of finally leaving MPS after many years of contribution and loyalty, agreed to stay on as Acting Treasurer while Dr. Mak has been on maternity leave.

I wish to thank all the Board for their tremendous support, and for the fun and energy of our Board meetings. In particular, my deepest thanks go to Dr. Piotrowski for her continued enthusiasm and initiative in our advocacy efforts, and her constant support and hard work.

Much invaluable and essential work for MPS takes place behind the scenes, by our indispensable Administrative Assistant, Heidi Tucker and Webmaster, Mokhtar Joundi of MJ Designs. As most of you have come to know, Heidi is an absolute gem and, fortunately, continues to love MPS (and we love her). As for Mokhtar, although he moved to Montreal and married this year, he has continued to be accessible, committed, efficient, perceptive, and creative in his work. I wish to convey my personal thanks to both Mokhtar and Heidi, who add sunshine to my work, and are the best and sturdiest of partners.

To close, I am delighted to announce that, despite severe budget cuts at the APA Practice Organization, we not only received a CAPP (Committee for the Advancement of Professional Practice) grant for the second year, but made a successful case to receive even more than last year - \$6000.00 U.S. The grant is designated specifically for Executive Director services and hiring a government relations expert or lobbyist. We are most grateful to APA again this year and look forward to putting the monies to use.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve as your Executive Director and best wishes for a successful year to you all.

Respectfully submitted,

Teresa Sztaba, Ph.D., C. Psych.  
Executive Director