
AGM 2017

President's Report



It is a pleasure to report on the activities of MPS over the past year to the membership. Despite the low number of psychologists in Manitoba, compared to the rest of the country, we are a powerful force and the impact we can make to improve access to psychologists for the public is growing.

Last year, in order to better organize the efforts of the organization, the board contracted a facilitator for 1½ days to assist us in developing a Strategic Plan. At a time when mental health and addictions is being discussed at both the provincial and national levels, the association wanted to be well prepared to develop a clear message and be ready to respond to government requests. At the Strategic Planning session, we identified three areas that would be the focus of MPS Advocacy: a) Access to services; b) Training opportunities for clinical psychology programs; and c) Services to underserved communities (e.g., indigenous, child welfare, older adults). The exercises during the Planning Day included identifying the strengths of MPS and other factors that support our work (e.g., government's current interest in mental health and addictions, decreased stigma of mental health, etc.), as well as being prepared for any obstacles, such as competing services/stakeholders, few resources/funding, and branding issues (i.e., lack of knowledge about what psychologists do, how psychologists differ from other mental health providers).

There have been a number of developments both provincially and federally that are advantageous to advocating for increased access to psychologists and psychological services. Over the past year, Dr. David Peachey and Health Intelligence Inc. and Associates, were commissioned by the Manitoba Government to identify planning options for clinical and preventive health-care service for Manitoba. Dr. Peachey understands the value and specialization of doctoral level psychologists and he recommends greater involvement of psychologists at the front end of mental health and addictions, in addition to the work already being done in the area of health psychology. He pointed out that Manitoba would need to increase the number of psychologists by 360 to meet with national average. This statement supports the case for considering training of psychologists in Manitoba. MPS, along with leadership in the Department of Clinical Health Psychology, is prepared to work with government and the regions to discuss new models of the provision of psychological care. Dr. Peachey also recommended that psychologists should be included in My Health Teams (Primary Care) and work with physicians and other professionals to provide the best healthcare possible for every Manitoban. Further information of this report can be found at <http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?item=40671>.

Nationally, the federal government specifically proposed an allocation of funds to the provinces and territories for Mental Health and Homecare Services. Following an initial refusal of this proposal by the jurisdictions, all jurisdictions, except Manitoba (to date), now have agreements with the federal government to allocate funds to these areas of healthcare. Minister Goertzen has announced his dedication to mental health and addictions by forming a task force to evaluate the situation in Manitoba. MPS is actively requesting participation on this task force or related committees. This government might be ready to engage psychologists even more in mental and behavioural health and MPS is prepared to act!

Outreach

- The following report outlines only some of the work done by the board. MPS recognizes that collaborating with other organizations and associations results in a stronger voice in support of increasing access to services for all Manitobans. Over the past year, we have continued to meet with various key stakeholders and we have developed relationships with new groups.
- Dr. Bill Davis, Dr. Pam Holens, Dr. Leonard Greenwood, and I have met with members of the Crisis Response Management Team of the Winnipeg Fire and Paramedic Service to discuss collaborations between WFPS and MPS. This group recognizes the need for increased access to psychologists, particularly to psychologists who have experience working with first responders and addressing crisis situations. More recently, Dr. Davis and I were invited to meet with the board of the United Firefighters of Winnipeg to discuss the best options for providing specialized psychological services for their members. We continue to build these relationships and meet with any group associated with the Winnipeg Fire and Paramedic Service to assist in developing the best model of care for first responders.
- Dr. Pam Holens and I were invited to attend a forum hosted by the Mental Health Commission of Canada, for increasing mental health services for first responders. The majority of the attendees were first responders in urban and rural areas, WFPS Human Resources, representatives from the Behavioural Health Unit of the Winnipeg Police Service, and representatives from the WRHA. The purpose of this forum was to promote the mental health resources and training for first responders as well as the recommendations for a Psychologically Healthy Workplace developed by the Mental Health Commission of Canada. The facilitators of this forum also encouraged the participants to develop an advocacy message for first responders.
- Dr. Pam Holens connected with Dr. Nick Carleton at the University of Regina who, along with colleagues, is conducting a Canada-wide needs assessment for first responders. She has been invited to be part of the Manitoba contingent for this study.
- Dr. Sztaba and I continue to meet with Dr. Jon Gerrard at his request to discuss his continued support for increasing access to psychologists.
- Dr. Jon Gerrard invited me to participate in a Town Hall meeting in his constituency on the importance of providing appropriate services for mental health conditions for all Manitobans.
- MPS is a non-partisan organization and we have requested meetings with all political parties to discuss the mental and behavioural health needs of Manitobans and psychology's role in helping to improve access. We reached out to all political parties prior to the election and asked them to respond to various questions.
- Dr. Sztaba and I met with Ms. Barb Wasilewski, ED of Primary Care at Manitoba Health to discuss opportunities for having psychologists integrated in My Health Teams.

- Dr. Teresa Sztaba and I had met with Carly Johnson, who is the new Executive Director of Mental Health and Spiritual Care and Nancy Parker with Manitoba Health. This meeting led to discussions about how MPS could be involved in several important initiatives in the near future.
- I represented MPS at the Primary Health Care Stakeholder Engagement and Planning Workshop hosted by Manitoba Health on October 27 and 28. The purpose of this workshop was to engage key primary care stakeholders by sharing information with various professions and to discuss the strategic direction and ways to advance primary care services and initiatives in Manitoba.
- Dr. Colleen Murphy and Dr. Jo Ann Unger represented MPS on the Mental Health Alliance, which is comprised of representatives from various mental health associations. They have also attended a number of public forums that were organized by mental health associations.
- Dr. Moira Somers continued to participate on the Workplace Psychological Health and Safety Advisory Group chaired by Manitoba Health and SAFE Work Manitoba.

MPS and Syrian Refugees

The Prime Minister's Office has welcomed thousands of Syrian refugees to Canada. This initiative is relevant to psychologists because the federal government announced that Syrian refugees will be eligible to receive funding for ten sessions of psychotherapy from registered psychologists. MPS continues to work closely with Manitoba Health and other key stakeholders to identify services, resources, and pathways to care for refugees.

I have continued to represent MPS on the Refugee Planning Committee and the following initiatives have been done:

- Strongly encouraging psychologists who have identified themselves as providing service to Immigrant and Refugees have been approved by Medavie Blue Cross and the Interim Federal Health Program as providers for this group (to receive reimbursement).
- I continue to advocate for full coverage of interpreters for psychologists who are working with refugees. Given the inadequate coverage by the IFHP, I asked that the Director of the Practice Directorate (CPA) and CPA to advocate for this critical service at the federal level. In the most recent documents of the IFHP, the interpreter services are covered for all sessions (not just the initial session), though it is still at a cost that is half that of what is charged in the province. CPA will continue to advocate for this need. I have stressed that if interpreters are unavailable, then service is available in only very few cases.
- Chairing a working group and collaborating with the Department of Clinical Health Psychology, the WRHA Child and Adolescent Treatment Service, and other key stakeholders to identify appropriate pathways to mental health care for Syrian Refugees. These documents can be accessed through Manitoba Health (<http://www.gov.mb.ca/health/primarycare/providers/srh.html>).

Representation on National Associations

I continue in the position as the Chair of the Council of Professional Associations of Psychologists (CPAP) and the Practice Directorate (Canadian Psychological Association (CPA)). In these roles, I also sit on the board of CPA, and on the Professional Liability Insurance Steering Committee. Although my term as Chair in both positions was ending in June, the Councils have asked that I continue as Chair for one more year so that the three elected positions to the Executive Committee (CPAP) and the Management Committee (PD) did not end at the same time. During this upcoming year, I will be mentoring one of the newly elected members on these Committees.

As you know, CPAP (i.e., whose members include all the provincial/territorial fraternal associations of psychologists) and CPA are the sponsors of the BMS Insurance Program. We have approved moving to a Professional Model which, over the next few years, will result in a surplus of funds to be used for designated purposes, including direct support to the program (e.g., premium reductions), investments in risk management activities (e.g., workshops, webinars), and other expenses related to the management of the program (e.g., legal fees related to the program). The number of members in this program continues to grow and we are pleased with the excellent benefits of the program and the ease with online or telephone renewal. All insured members will be receiving renewal notices shortly.

The Practice Directorate is comprised of CPAP members, though it falls under the umbrella of CPA. This year, we updated our Terms of Reference and our Strategic Plan. The goals of the Strategic Plan include: a) Advocating for increased funding to allow for access to the services of psychologists; b) Increasing the number of psychologists available for the provision of services; and c) Increasing public access to quality services provided by the best qualified professionals. The Practice Directorate is also engaging in a number of initiatives over the next year, including: a) Developing a commercial and media campaign about psychologists and psychological services that can be used by all jurisdictions; b) Conducting a literature review and paper regarding the cost and adverse effects of inadequate psychological assessment/diagnosis and ineffective psychotherapy; and c) Organizing a Leadership Conference in 2018.

MPS was also represented at the American Psychological Association Practice Organization's Practice Leadership Conference in Washington, DC from March 4-7, 2017. Dr. Teresa Sztaba, Dr. Jeffery Harvey (Director of the Public Education Campaign), and I had an opportunity to network with and learn from psychology associations across Canada and the United States. The seminars focused on building stronger associations and innovative strategies to advocate for psychologists and psychological services.

Acknowledgements

More than ever, it is because of the board's dedication that MPS is being invited to meetings with government and other key stakeholders. This board is proud to be the voice of psychology in the province and grateful that the members have entrusted such an important role to this group. Personally, I would like to thank the entire board for their tireless efforts in promoting access to psychology and in educating the public and professionals about the role of the psychologist.

The MPS Board will be saying good-bye to two of its members. I would like to thank Dr. Lesley Ritchie (Director of Continuing Education) for her dedication to organizing and running the Continuing Education events with high quality presenters and introducing the 'hot breakfast.' We welcome Dr. Andy Jones as the Director of Continuing Education. In the role of Business of Practice Director, I would like to thank Dr. Moira Somers for her thought-provoking questions during board meetings to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of MPS, in

representing MPS on the committee for Workplace Health and Safety, facilitating a teleconference learning opportunity, and in organizing the Cultural Competency workshop.

Dr. Lisa Thouas (Member-at-Large) and Ms. Maia Kredentser (Student Director) keep the members informed by sending out eblasts of MPS activities as well as articles and resources that might be of benefit to members. Dr. Jeff Harvey has organized Psychology Month activities and the 50th Anniversary of MPS. Dr. Kristin Reynolds has taken on the role as Communications Director and she has already been responding to requests by the media.

Dr. Alicia Ordonez, Dr. Sonia Marrone, and Dr. Jason Ediger continue to provide valuable input and ideas at our board meetings as well as unique initiatives. I would like to thank Dr. Pam Holens for her many years of taking minutes in the role of Secretary on the MPS Board. Moving out of this role, Dr. Holens will continue with MPS's work with the WFPS and serve as a Member-at-Large on the board. Dr. Colleen Murphy will move into the role of secretary as she continues to participate in various activities to build relationships with other organizations. I would like to congratulate Dr. Leanne Mak and her husband Colin on the birth of their second son, Eric. She is on a 6-month maternity leave from her role as treasurer and will be returning in April. Just when Dr. Leonard Greenwood thought he was leaving the MPS Board, he was generous with his time and agreed to serve as interim treasurer while Dr. Mak was on maternity leave.

Dr. Jennifer Volk (Chair) is joined by Dr. Moira Somers, Dr. Jo Ann Unger, and Dr. Teresa Sztaba to develop policy and criteria for the newly formed Social Action Committee.

I would also like to extend my sincere appreciation to our administrative assistant, Ms. Heidi Tucker, our webmaster, Mr. Mokhtar Joundi, and our bookkeeper, Ms. Liisa Burgas, all of whom work to ensure that the association functions smoothly.

I would like to thank Dr. Teresa Sztaba, who works tirelessly for MPS in various capacities. Her dedication to the organization, to psychology, and to Manitobans on very limited time is incredible. Her perseverance, efficiency, and excellent writing skills has made her invaluable to me and the organization.

MPS celebrated its 50th Anniversary on February 24, 2017 at the Mercedes-Benz dealership. Dr. Jeffery Harvey organized the event with assistance from Ms. Heidi Tucker, Dr. Teresa Sztaba, Ms. Maia Kredentser, and student volunteers. I would also like to extend a thank you to Dr. Ivan Bilash who presented on the history of MPS. It was a lovely event and we honoured Dr. Bob McIlwraith with the Distinguished Lifetime Achievement Award and Dr. Bill Davis with the President's Award. Thank you to everyone for making the event memorable. The organization has much to celebrate despite having to advocate for the same issues over the last 50 years. I want to thank our predecessors for setting the path for increased access to psychologists and psychological care. There have been many victories over the past 50 years and we continue to serve our members and advocate for the public. I am hopeful that now is the time for psychology to be at the forefront in helping to develop better models of healthcare provision to all Manitobans.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Andrea Piotrowski, Ph.D., C. Psych.

MPS President