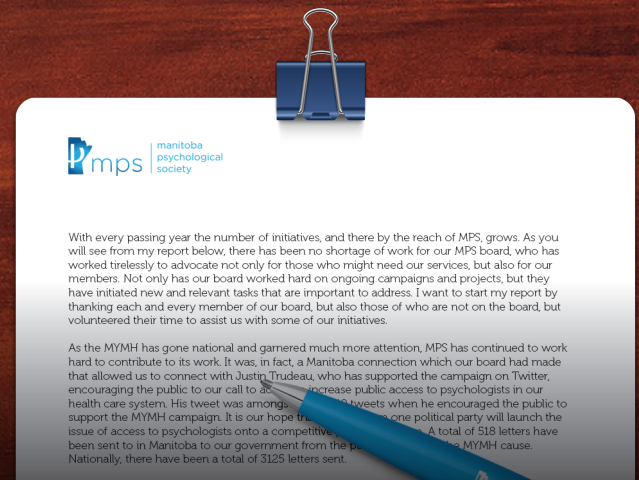


AGM 2014

President's Report



With every passing year the number of initiatives, and there by the reach of MPS, grows. As you will see from my report below, there has been no shortage of work for our MPS board, who has worked tirelessly to advocate not only for those who might need our services, but also for our members. Not only has our board worked hard on ongoing campaigns and projects, but they have initiated new and relevant tasks that are important to address. I want to start my report by thanking each and every member of our board, but also those of who are not on the board, but volunteered their time to assist us with some of our initiatives.

As the MYMH has gone national and garnered much more attention, MPS has continued to work hard to contribute to its work. It was, in fact, a Manitoba connection which our board had made that allowed us to connect with Justin Trudeau, who has supported the campaign on Twitter, encouraging the public to our call to action to increase public access to psychologists in our health care system. His tweet was amongst the top 10 tweets when he encouraged the public to support the MYMH campaign. It is our hope that support from one political party will launch the issue of access to psychologists onto a competitive political platform. A total of 518 letters have been sent to in Manitoba to our government from the public supporting the MYMH cause. Nationally, there have been a total of 3125 letters sent.

Our MYMH efforts have worked hand in hand with our public education and communication efforts. Dr. Pam Holens, who managed a board team working on Psychology Month, put on yet another impressive year of talks that better improve the public health information on our mental health. The volunteers from our professional community, who volunteered their time to offer these talks, are very much appreciated. Our interim communications director and president elect, Dr. Andrea Piotrowski, has also maintained strong relationships with media, and our members have volunteered their time to speak to media on numerous topics that too improve overall public mental health awareness.

Further to these efforts, our connections with media have grown. We have had prominent pieces covered by CJOB and have built greater connections with other agencies, including CBC. Ms. Kim Lawson had produced a mini-documentary (previously printed in the last edition of our Society Page) which has fostered more positive relationships with that radio station. Dahlia Kurtz, also of CJOB has been active in advocating on air the importance of the MYMH campaign, and has regularly had some of our board on her show. Further to this, MPS had been asked to join as a consultant to a media education group run by CMHA Winnipeg, CMHA Manitoba and the Manitoba Schizophrenia Society. With continued relationships MPS has built with other agencies, this media education group turned to us to assist them in informing and educating the media on how best to address mental health, with a focus on education on terminology and the different aspects of how mental health affects individuals' lives. Dr. Piotrowski and myself serve on this committee.

As alluded to above, one of the most important things MPS has continued to work on has been its relationships with other organizations. We have done this with some new initiatives we are working on with the government (see below), but also through other community and peer support organizations. Resurrected in the fall of 2013, MPS was invited to be a part of a formal political initiative that is the Mental Health Alliance. As a group, this new alliance has come up with several goals it wishes to address, which include issues related to holding the government more accountable on the transparency of his spending of health dollars on mental health issues, but also for a call to increase the numbers of mental health specialists, such as psychologists, within the public health system.

Our advocacy efforts have also resulted in a collaboration with Manitoba Health, who approached us about working together on a study to examine the role of a stepped care system of psychological care in a rural primary care setting. As we passed this along to the department of Clinical Health Psychology, our combined government and academic team was successful in obtaining a planning grant, which will help support our grant to conduct a full study on this matter in the fall.

Along those lines of increasing connections, our Business of Practice Director, Dr. Moira Somers has made formal ties with the Manitoba Chamber of Commerce. It is our hope that through this connection we can inform Manitoba Businesses that it is critical to choose insurance packages for their employees that provide better coverage for psychological services to their employees. We hope to better inform the business community of the impact of mental health on the cost of disability. Dr. Moira Somers has also been active on numerous other initiatives related to the business of practice, including having run a few workshops and an upcoming Business of Practice Teleseminar.

On more national fronts, Dr. Alicia Ordonez is our new Diversity Delegate to the American Psychological Association, and will be taking over the role of finding new ways to address issues of diverse clientele. Dr. Andrea Piotrowski was re-elected as the chair of the Practice Directorate, and continues to represent a strong Manitoba voice across the country.

The board has also worked hard on trying to better meet the needs of its members. Our executive director, Dr. Teresa Sztaba has been a driving force behind this. She has started work on developing an ethics committee and further to this a colleague assistance program. We are also trying to find other perks for our membership.

One of the most interesting issues we have focused on recently has been the issue of the value of psychologists. Given we set rates for psychologists in private practice, we thought we would explore the issue of advocating for the value of psychologists in the public sector. Thus far our subcommittee of Dr. Jason Ediger, Dr. Leonard Greenwood, and I, have met with psychologists in different areas of public practice to gauge their interest in MPS exploring this avenue of advocacy. We have received strong support to carry on with this initiative and have also accrued some comparison data on remuneration across professionals who work in similar scopes or have similar levels of education in health care. Dr. Ediger and I were able to secure legal consult as well, and results from our findings will be presented for further discussion and determination of the next steps at our Annual General Conference.

Our continuing education efforts continue to garner more participants, and the content remains relevant and appealing to a large audience. Dr. Lesley Ritchie has been largely responsible for these initiatives, obtaining co-sponsorships with other organizations, once again raising the profile of psychologists in Manitoba.

Our student member, Ms. Julie Erickson has remained an active participant in almost all of our initiatives. She has accrued a cohort of student volunteers who have all been active in assisting our board with numerous initiatives, most recently with our Annual General Conference.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of our board members, mentioned above, but also Dr. Leanne Mak (our treasurer) for her ongoing diligence in managing our budget, and Dr. Lori Mac, Dr. Rob Santos, and Dr. Lisa Thouas for their participation in many of the numerous activities noted above.

Last, but not least, I want to thank our former registrar, Dr. Doug Tataryn, for his many years of service on the board. Dr. Tataryn had recently stepped down from his role as registrar, but also as a board member. His input and company will be missed by our board.

Respectfully submitted,

R. Abdulrehman, Ph.D., C. Psych.
MPS President