



UPDATE FROM CACAP EXECUTIVE

A Time for Reflection and Renewal

By Drs. Jana Davidson (Former CACAP President 2018-2020) and Claire De Souza (CACAP President)

It was wonderful to 'meet' with everyone at our inaugural virtual CACAP Annual Conference in Sept 2020. We are grateful to the CACAP Conference Planning Committee and Research and Scientific Program Committee for organizing an incredible conference, based on member feedback.

We recognize that this has been an unprecedented year: full of challenges and tragedies, but also of opportunities and great demonstrations of caring and compassion across Canada and the world. COVID-19 will leave us forever changed. The importance of access to mental health care as we continue to manage living with COVID-19 is evident for children, youth and families, all of whom are struggling with the isolation, changes and stresses brought on by this pandemic. To better understand the impacts of COVID-19 on the mental health of children and youth, CACAP has endorsed a national study with international collaborators to evaluate mental health access prior to and following the pandemic in Canada. We saw clearly through the annual conference the exponential rise in use of Telehealth as colleagues from across the country stepped up to meet the need of children, youth and families virtually forever changing how we deliver care.

As the pandemic has evolved, social inequities and structural racism existent in our society have been brought into sharp focus. In response, CACAP has joined in solidarity with The Black Lives Matter movement, ignited in the United States with the death of George Floyd, and we remain committed to addressing structural oppression and racism as a public health issue in Canada. A commitment

that demands action and advocacy and that will benefit from the establishment of a CACAP Advocacy Committee.

What remains constant during these times of unprecedented change is our desire and drive as child and youth psychiatrists to provide the best care for the children, youth and families who require our expertise and support. CACAP is well positioned to support our members in this work. Over the past two years we have settled into our new role as a professional organization and have undertaken significant work to build the foundation for our efforts going forward. These have included solidifying the infrastructure with respect to governance, developing the financial plan to ensure financial stability, enhancing communication with members, developing our virtual presence and building collaboration with other organizations. We continue to develop educational opportunities based on member feedback.

Our Board retreat in July 2020 to review and renew our mission, vision and values set the stage for CACAP to renew our strategic plan which will include input from our members through 2021. The plan includes broadening our scope to include members who primarily work with youth and to have that reflected in our name – Canadian Academy of Child and Youth Psychiatry. This invitation and recognition are reflective of where the profession is moving with respect to seeing emerging adults (youth) as benefiting from a continued developmental approach. These are significant changes which will require feedback from our members to ratify – this work will proceed through the fall and early 2021 via surveys and townhalls.

Despite the challenges of 2020 there is much to look forward to as we emerge from this global crisis with a renewed mission and strategic plan that reflects what we have come through and where we want to go. We welcome new Board members Drs. Lila Amirali, Jordan Cohen, Kelly Saran, Raj Rasasingham, Lina Anang and Alexandra Manning. We say good-bye to Drs. Rachelle Bouffard and Sophia Hrycko who have worked tirelessly for our organization over many years as members of the Executive and Drs. Gary Altman, Chetana Kulkarni and Alvin Kang who are completing their terms or stepping back from their positions as Board

members. We have benefitted immensely from their participation on the CACAP Executive and Board.

This year, COVID has brought home the importance of community, connection, and mental health. Our virtual conference enabled connecting through a virtual community and we wish to continue the communication, and enhance opportunities for collaboration, networking, and education throughout the year. As our recent conference has highlighted, there are many areas in need of our advocacy. Together, with an engaged membership, we can facilitate much needed change.