

Jerzy B. Gajewski, MD, FRCSC

President
Canadian Urological Association
president@cua.org



As mentioned in past CUA News pieces, the CUA Executive has embarked on a 5-Year Strategic Plan. One of the objectives is to develop and implement an advocacy business plan. The realization of this objective would position CUA as the voice for all matters urological in Canada.

What does this really mean? Where does the CUA fit in? A 2007 study¹ showed that, among urology residents, 68% believe that the role of the health advocate is an important one in residency training and in urological practice.

Knowing its importance, how can the CUA put this ideal into practice?

According to the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada, the role of health advocate includes identifying “the determinants of health that affect a patient, so as to be able to effectively contribute to improving individual and societal health in Canada.” In this area, CUA’s Patient Information Brochures meet this need. They are available to CUA members (as a benefit of membership) for distribution to patients. They are written in an informal and non-scientific tone to speak directly to the patient. The brochures range from disease descriptions to discharge instructions. According to a recent CUA survey, these brochures were cited as being an important part of patient care and education.

Another recent CUA initiative contributing to improving societal health is the urologic information site—www.uroinfo.ca. This site is becoming the “go-to” place for patients. The information on it is written by CUA members. The goal of the site is to be the source of “honest and balanced” information about urology. Uroinfo.ca is open to the general public, patients and their family members.

Another aspect of the health advocate’s role is recognizing and responding to “issues, settings, circumstances or situations in which advocacy on behalf of patients, professions or society is appropriate.” The CUA is working hard to respond to this role. The PSA-screening controversy last year illustrated how important it was to have the CUA respond to queries—from our patients and from the public. We will be embracing many tools to address the public when these health issues and questions arise.

Advocacy is fundamental to the promotion of health. The CUA is taking its place as a health advocate in Canada. We look forward to sharing our initiatives with you.

Reference

1. Leveridge M, Beiko D, Wilson JWL, et al. Health advocacy training in urology: a Canadian survey on attitudes and experience in residency. *Can Urol Assoc J* 2007;1:363-9.