

# Residents' page

Jason Chang, MD

Like most good things, my term as Residents' Page Coordinator has come to an end. Yet fear not, for an experienced and able, "new and improved" successor by the name of Dr Lily Malkin will be taking over. Lily graduated from the University of Toronto medical school and will be a second-year family medicine resident at McGill University when she takes on this responsibility.

It has been my privilege to work with the bright minds on the Editorial Advisory Board as the resident representative, and with *Canadian Family Physician's* editorial staff in fine-tuning this monthly section. Now, as the thrill of completing residency draws near (oh,

so Sinatra), while the options for us are many and the responsibility that will be ours is daunting, I wish my fellow second-year residents all the best out in the real world we will enter next month.

Dr Kendall Noel, who has been Chair of the College of Family Physicians of Canada's (CFPC) Section of Residents during this past year, will close the academic year with a few words.

**Dr Chang** is a second-year family medicine resident at the University of Alberta in Edmonton and was a member of the Editorial Advisory Board of Canadian Family Physician.

## Strength of teamwork

Kendall Noel, MD CM

It is said that teamwork is the fuel that allows common people to achieve uncommon results. One group that has exemplified this statement is the CFPC's Section of Residents (SOR). The SOR, comprising two representatives from each family medicine program across the country (check [www.cfpc.ca](http://www.cfpc.ca), under Education and SOR Member Directory to see who they are), meets twice a year and is headed by an executive committee. The SOR—initially known as the Associate Members Group—has long been a part of the CFPC and is the primary source for resident representation to CFPC committees. The following summarizes the work done by the SOR this past year.

### Board of Directors

The fall Board meeting would have been considered a complete success for residents, if it were not for the increase in examination fees passed by the Board. Having successfully argued against fee increases for the last couple of years, the SOR found itself

up against a College ever aware of the rising cost of certification examinations. While unsuccessful in its attempts to repeal the increase, the SOR was able to obtain Board approval of a motion assuring resident participation on the CFPC Finance Committee.

We hope that, by sitting on this committee, the SOR will be able to assist the CFPC in making financial decisions that are not only fiscally responsible, but resident friendly. To this end, the Board of Directors passed a second motion proposed by the SOR, calling upon the CFPC to establish alternate payment schedules and methods for its certification examinations. We eagerly await updates from the College.

### Family Medicine Forum 2001

Family Medicine Forum 2001 (FMF) this past October gave the SOR an opportunity to present the preliminary data from the 2001 National Section of Residents Survey to family medicine program directors. The final report was presented to the SOR at

*Residents are encouraged to e-mail questions, comments, personal articles, and helpful information to [sor\\_cfpc@yahoo.ca](mailto:sor_cfpc@yahoo.ca).*

its most recent meeting in March 2002. A motion for controlled release of results received the SOR's approval and will allow residents and faculty to use the data for research purposes.

The FMF also gave the SOR the opportunity to meet with Emergency Medicine Program Directors, where it became evident that the directors were interested in improving the emergency medicine application process. The SOR has reviewed the proposed changes and found them to be resident friendly, including a requirement that an SOR appointee serve as an ombudsman for the process. We anticipate that emergency medicine applicants for 2003-2004 will find the changes favourable.

### **In-training Evaluation Committee**

In case you have not heard, the CFPC is reviewing how family medicine residents are evaluated throughout their training. Changes are intended to make the evaluation process more accountable to the general public, a more valid assessment of resident skills, and less costly. While no final document has been produced, the SOR, through its involvement on all CFPC committees examining the issue, plans to ensure that residents are not short-changed.

### **Other resident organizations**

This past year has seen the SOR continue to grow in its role as a legitimate voice in the chorus of family medicine representation. To this end, the SOR's relationship with the Canadian Association of Internes & Residents (CAIR) has been strengthened by its continued participation at CAIR's board meetings and has ideally laid the groundwork for future collaborative efforts between the two groups. We hope that better communication between the SOR and CAIR will serve as a template for relations with the Fédération des médecins résidents du Québec's family medicine committee. By sharing information and ideas among all groups, we can ensure that, wherever family medicine resident concerns are raised, a united voice will be heard loud and clear.

### **American Academy of Family Physicians**

At the last CFPC Board meeting, the SOR's executives had the opportunity to sit down with the President of the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP) for an impromptu discussion. As a result, the SOR will reinstitute relations with the

AAFP's Congress of Residents (the SOR equivalent in the United States). We hope to learn from each other's issues and agendas, as we are likely to have common concerns during our training. We look forward to the report from their meeting and to having one of their representatives attend the SOR meeting in the fall.

### **Family medicine resident forum 2002**

The first annual family medicine resident forum and symposium is now in the planning stage. Born out of a realization that the SOR could do a better job of promoting itself, and that other CFPC sections (researchers and teachers) had some planned activities, the SOR decided to organize its own stream in conjunction with this fall's FMF in Montreal, Que. Potential topics include resident well-being and resident education. In addition, the SOR is planning a social function, guaranteed to be one of the better-attended events!

### **Looking into the future**

The time has come to bid farewell to all the SOR's second-year representatives, in particular subcommittee chairs Jason Chang (Communications), Li-Hsin Chang (Survey), Bernhard Friz (Education), and Jean Rawling (Vice-chair 2001-2002). You can be sure, however, that the group will continue to grow under the leadership of James Stewart (Chair-elect), Heather Ring (incoming Vice-chair), Jennifer Brokenshire, Lily Malkin, Peter Rogers, Heidi Seaborn-Moyse, and Janine Stephens.

And so the future looks very promising for the SOR (did anyone ever doubt that fact?) because it has the opportunity for a key role in resident education. As the CFPC deals with issues of in-training evaluation and skyrocketing examination costs, the SOR has a specific duty to ensure that resident voices are heard. The SOR's active participation on CFPC committees ensures that the College remains faithful to all of its constituent members (including residents) and that the College's policies reflect resident concerns. We are, after all, on the same team.

Have a great summer!



*Dr Noel is a second-year resident at the University of Ottawa in Ontario, and is the 2001-2002 Chair of the Section of Residents at the College of Family Physicians of Canada.*