Canadian Society of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery

President's Report
May 10, 2014

It has been a privilege and honor for me to have served as this year’s President of this prestigious society of our specialty. Winter is hopefully over, and we all look forward to celebrating the successes of our specialty over the past year at this year’s annual meeting of our national society to be held at the Westin Hotel, May 11th – 13th, in our magnificent capital city of Ottawa. We are certainly at a major cross-road in medicine where technology is playing a greater role in patient care. In that spirit I selected this year’s theme -“Prevention and Innovation – A Challenge for the Future”. I invited three internationally known faculty whose presentations will capture the theme and provide us insights as to how to think outside the box as we continue to explore new technology, review the role of transplantation, understand the future of regeneration and address the need for prevention with a vision to the future of surgery in the 21st century. Invited guest speakers include “Who’s Who” within each of these domains.

Professor Martin Birchall, University College London, is one of the pre-eminent scientists whose research and innovations in stem cell culture and regeneration have helped to facilitate successful laryngeal and tracheal transplantation. Dr. Daniel Alam was one of the lead surgeons in performing the first successful face transplantation at the Cleveland Clinic and who continues to explore this avenue of remarkable study. In addition, we are privileged to have Dr. Joseph Kerschner, Professor of Otolaryngology-Head & Neck Surgery and the current Dean, Faculty of Medicine, University of Wisconsin, whose recent innovative work on a novel test that can better detect aspiration reflux that is possibly implicated in chronic lung disease. In addition, we have identified some of our own national society members who will add to this most fascinating theme and hopefully open up new ideas and avenues to explore in the future. The scientific program has been under the stewardship of Dr. Fred Kozak. He must be applauded for his leadership and the initiation of many new innovations including the sessions titled “Celebrating Our Own”. The program should have something for everyone within our ever expanding specialty.

I am delighted to report to you that this year’s pharma tour on November 22nd was one of the most successful to date. This year we have received an unprecedented number of platinum partners to include Karl Storz Endoscopy, Medtronic Canada, Takeda Canada, Merck Canada and Shire Rare Diseases. In addition, we have received one gold sponsor, MedEl and two silver sponsors, Baxter and Genzyme. On the Saturday prior to the meeting we are pleased to offer a most popular middle ear endoscopic course located at the University of Ottawa, supported by Karl Storz Endoscopy and chaired by Dr. David Pothier and his team.

I am indebted to the many individuals who have supported our mission over the past year, our executive, the council and the membership including the many volunteers who chair the many educational and research committees. They are to be congratulated for their support and guidance. The stringent rules of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada controlling CME events continue to challenge our Society in obtaining support for our meeting. We therefore continue to be vigilant and innovative in securing educational funds that will help us maintain the highest quality of our annual meetings, fund our Society’s initiatives and promote and protect our specialty nationally. Some reduction in the stringent rules applied by the College has been slightly modified to permit us to engage our corporate partners in a more fruitful manner.

In the theme I am pleased to report to you that this year’s Canadian conference on Undergraduate Medical Education in Otolaryngology-Head & Neck Surgery designed to standardize undergraduate teaching and education in our specialty nationally, was sponsored by the CSO-HNS (Presidential Discretionary Fund) and the Department of Otolaryngology-Head & Neck Surgery, University of Toronto. The retreat, which I attended, was held on Saturday October 19, 2014. This year’s conference Director was Dr. Kevin Fung with Co-Directors to include Drs. Al Chiodo and Ian Witterick. This is the second time
this event has been held, with the last retreat spearheaded by Dr. Kevin Fung in Ottawa, October 27, 2012.

This year the CSO-HNS website has undergone a major update and a new look to provide material to you in a timely fashion.

As I look into the future (one of our themes) I see many opportunities and feel confident that our society is firmly established. However, we have many challenges that we must address that include job opportunities for our trainees, challenges and turf battles from other specialties and finally maintaining the profile of our specialty as we move forward in the revolutionary and expensive era of technology. You, the membership, therefore are our future and it is hoped that together we can be stronger as we traverse the terrain of our wonderful specialty.

This year I have asked the Chairs (COACH) and Program Directors under the stewardship of Dr. Wayne Matthews, Chair of the Physician Resources committee to the Canadian Society of Otolaryngology-Head & Neck Surgery, to meet on Saturday May 10th in a joint session to evaluate the manpower needs in Canada and to explore the current number of residents we are graduating and determine if some reductions in the number of trainees should be considered. This is a most challenging task but one that the Royal College of Surgeons has requested each specialty explore. My thanks to Wayne for the well-structured document that he has prepared for discussion.

Dr. John Yoo and his committee have done an outstanding job in re-writing the bylaws of our Society, seeking legal advice and bringing them into line with other surgical specialties. My thanks to John for this most remarkable job. This will be brought to council and then to be voted on at the Annual General Business meeting.

We are grateful to Donna and our accountants – Collins Barrow, for representing us as we were selected for a GST/HST audit of our Society’s books. Except for a small payment we were successful with this review.

For the first time we are holding the President’s dinner on the Monday evening. This year’s special guest speaker is our own Dr. Roberta Bondar, one of the most celebrated Canadian space astronauts. She will share with us in her presentation at the dinner, her insights and experiences in space and mention some of the after effects of this travel on the human body. What an opportunity to meet this remarkable neurologist and astronaut.

The city is ready to receive you! I am indebted to Dr. Martin Corsten and his wife Karen for the local arrangements planning and coordinating an attractive and exciting social program which will be full of surprises. Their personal connections in Ottawa will make the events most enjoyable.

Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to Ms. Donna Humphrey our society’s administrator for her remarkable leadership that has further enhanced the profile of our National Specialty. The registration is at an all-time record, hotel rooms sold out and all flights to Ottawa filled to capacity.

I look forward to seeing you all in our Nation’s Capital.

Respectfully submitted,

Patrick Gullane, CM, MB, FRCSC, FACS, Hon FRACS, Hon FRCS, Hon FRCSI
President