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## PRESIDENT'S UPDATE

### President's Update

The Ontario Rheumatology Association has remained extremely engaged with issues that concern Ontario rheumatologists throughout early 2013. We have had meetings with the Ministry of Health's Exceptional Access Program to discuss availability of, and wait times for access to biologic drugs for our patients. Ongoing discussions with Great West Life, Sunlife and Manulife have produced some tangible improvements to the forms and criteria that these insurers are using, though a great deal of work still lies ahead, for which the Canadian Rheumatology Association has given us their blessing to work on their behalf. The ORA met with other provincial organizations at the Canadian Rheumatology Association meeting in Ottawa in February and we, along with Dr. Denis Choquette from the province of Quebec, are now leading a new provincial committee that will report to the CRA. The established working

groups of the ORA (EMR, OBRI and Models of Care) plus our section at the OMA have all been hard at work for you and their updates can be found in this newsletter, and a new initiative for improving a rheumatology manpower is well under way, again with the support of the CRA. Finally our Annual Meeting is set for May 24-26, 2013 at JW Marriott in Muskoka and Dr. Janet Pope and her team have organized an excellent weekend. Registration is now open, so don't delay, register today.

The ORA remains committed to representing the rheumatologists of Ontario and if you have any questions or concerns, do not hesitate to contact me at [president@ontariorheum.ca](mailto:president@ontariorheum.ca). It has been a pleasure to work with the extraordinarily dedicated ORA executive and administration over the last year and I am looking forwards to all the exciting initiatives planned for 2013-2014




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## ORA ANNUAL MEETING

The Ontario Rheumatology Association's Annual meeting is being held May 24-26, 2013 at the JW Marriott resort in Minnett. This event is going to be another excellent weekend, with scientific sessions, workshops, thieves market as well as networking

opportunities and leisure activities such as cooking classes and bird of prey demonstrations. Once again we will be holding "The Walk for Arthritis" as a fundraiser for the Arthritis Society, and on Saturday night we will be having our annual gala dinner

dance.

[Register now!](#)



## OMA UPDATE

### OMA update

Payment discount of 0.5% on all physician payments, in effect from April 1, 2013. The remittance advice (RA) will show the total payment discount as a summary line. The Ministry has not confirmed when the discount will appear on RAs – MDs will be notified once that date is finalized.

Laboratory tests removed from the Ontario laboratory requisition form but still available to patients with appropriate indications, effective November 1, 2012: Ferritin, Thyroid stimulating hormone, Vitamin B12.

Joint injections are uninsured services for injection of intra-articular viscosupplementation agents, effective Jan. 1, 2013.

Intensive and Coronary Care Premium (C101) restored as of April 1, 2013.

The referring physician must determine if multiple requests by a patient or the patient's representative to different physicians in the same specialty for the same condition are medically necessary. Services that are not medically necessary are uninsured.

Fibromyalgia has a new diagnostic code 726.

Physician to physician e-consults are now billable if done by secure e-mail (codes K738/739).

CMPA Fees will rise to \$1100 for 2014, and then increase \$20-30/year until 2023, when they will be \$1325.

OHIP claims can now be submitted through a web browser. Philip A. Baer MDCM, Chair OMA Section on Rheumatology

## MODELS OF CARE

### 5 MOC pillars

- 1) *engagement and awareness*, 2) *early access and efficient triaging*, 3) *evidence based treat to target practices*, 4) *outcome measurements and 5) education and adherence*.

The work of the Ontario MOC committee continues to be well aligned with the National Framework led by the Arthritis Alliance of Canada. Most recently, the Alliance held a half day meeting during the Canadian Rheumatology Association Annual General Meeting. The purpose of the meeting was to learn about provincial models being led across the country and how a national framework could align ongoing work and resources currently available.

The Ontario MOC working committee led by Chair, Dr. Vandana Ahluwalia were pleased to attend this meeting and share details on the 5 key pillars that have been identified for the Ontario provincial framework. These include 1) engagement and awareness, 2) early access and efficient triaging, 3) evidence based treat to target practices, 4) outcome measurements and 5) education and adherence.

Since the last report, there have been several other new

developments:

In an effort to better understand the current care map for patients, the Ontario MOC team has dedicated time and resources to field research exploring how individual patients diagnosed with Inflammatory Arthritis progress through the system in order to access drug therapy (DMARDs/biologics) and disease management support. Particular attention is being given to identifying any rate limiting steps or "levers" to accessing the Ontario system. Once this work is completed it will be used to define the costs associated with current care pathways and any costs savings that can be realized through the proposed new model of care.

Continued outreach to other speciality groups including the low back pain pilot program (ISAEC) led by Dr. Raj Rampersaud to learn specifically how

these models were set up and how funding platforms were secured for provincial implementation.

important key stakeholder meetings continue to take place with the payers (Ontario Ministry of Health, Pharmaceutical partners and Private payers) to advocate for support and funding of this important initiative.

On April 9<sup>th</sup> 2013, committee members will attend a retreat in Toronto to share best practices and collaborate on the implementation phase. For more information visit the Arthritis Alliance of Canada at: <http://www.arthritisalliance.ca/newsletters/index.php>

## ONTARIO BEST PRACTICES RESEARCH INITIATIVE

The Ontario Best Practices Research initiative has recently updated its corporate branding and website. Visit us on-line at [www.OBRI.ca](http://www.OBRI.ca)



### *Highlights from recent meetings*

On March 8 2013 Members of the OBRI Research and Operations Committee along with OBRI mentors Dr. Janet

Pope and Dr. Ed Keystone, came together to review and explore important research questions in the areas of pharmacotherapy, clinical outcomes and practice patterns and health system efficiencies that could be address and analyzed using the OBRI research platform. 10 research ideas were presented to the OBRI Planning and Review Board for prioritization. Details on the OBRI Research Priorities are now available at [www.OBRI.ca](http://www.OBRI.ca)

The 4<sup>th</sup> Annual OBRI Industry Council meeting was chaired

by Dr. Bill Bensen and held on April 4<sup>th</sup>. Representatives from 7 pharmaceutical companies and the Rx & D attended the session. The industry council report was presented by Dr. Claire Bombardier along with the research priorities for the OBRI platform.

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## ELECTRONIC MEDICAL RECORD COMMITTEE

The ORA EMR subcommittee (led by Dr. Vandana Ahluwalia, Dr Art Karasik, Dr Henry Avers , Dr Ami Mody and Sandra Couto) continue to work closely with EMR vendors. Accuro, Oscar and Practice Solutions have been commissioned by the ORA to finalize Phase II developments which specifically include:

- New forms for SpA and PSA/CTD
- Interfaces for patient reported outcomes
- Rheum specific shortcuts
- Harmonization of rheum & e-OBRI data collection forms

We are pleased to announce that the EMR vendor fair will be held again during the upcoming ORA AGM meeting. EMR platforms will have the opportunity to showcase their Phase II rheumatology developments. We encourage you to visit the EMR fair on Friday evening May 24, 2013 between 5-8pm!

For rheumatologists currently using EMR solutions or thinking about it, the ORA EMR subcommittee will be hosting its first EMR User Forum. The session will be held on Friday June 28<sup>th</sup> from 2-6pm. Ontario MD and EHealth Ontario have been invited to join the meeting. Breakout sessions with individual EMR platforms have been arranged to demonstrate new tools and learn how to maximize work flow efficiencies. Stay tuned for more information which will be shared soon!

visit the EMR fair  
on Friday evening  
May 24, 2013  
between 5-8pm!

**Ontario Rheumatology Association**

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The Mission of the Ontario Rheumatology Association is to represent Ontario Rheumatologists and promote their pursuit of excellence in Arthritis care in Ontario through **Leadership, Advocacy, Education and Communications.**

**ORA executive**

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Dr. Janet Pope - Annual General Meeting Steering Committee Chair [agmscientificdirector@ontariorheum.ca](mailto:agmscientificdirector@ontariorheum.ca)

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**Third Party Payer Issues**

Many of you will have noted significant and disruptive changes to insurance company funding for rheumatic drugs in the past few months. The ORA is working hard to try and bring some reason and science to this situation but we predict more difficulties to come. In order to best deal with this issue, we welcome any comments or scenarios that you have encountered, such as the one listed below. Send all your comments to [president@ontariorheum.ca](mailto:president@ontariorheum.ca)

find out the criteria one must go to the Claim Secure website. Between filling out the forms, and getting a refusal, 4-6 weeks were wasted.

If you have any similar cases or concerns, send them to [president@ontariorheum.ca](mailto:president@ontariorheum.ca)

**Insurance example:**

A member applied for Cimzia, with Empire life. On their preauthorization form it asks for previous drugs prescribed for this condition in this case for RA. The member listed MTX 25mg sc + Plaquenil 200mg po bid + short prednisone courses for 7 months. Refused. When phoned and asked why told pt was not on Arava, it turns out Claim Secure handles Empire Life's pre-authorization. The criteria for approval for each biologic is on Claims Secure's website. Nowhere on the Empire Life pre-authorization form does it mention any criteria for approval nor does it mention to