

Ontario Rheumatology Association Newsletter

Fall 2009



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ORA and Ministry of Health

Welcome to our Fall 2009 newsletter. There has been a lot of activity on numerous projects at the Ontario Rheumatology Association.

One of our biggest activities has been communication with the Ministry of Health in Ontario and particularly with the Exceptional Access Program as it relates to access for biologic drugs for our patients. Members of the ORA executive have had meetings with MOH-EAP officials and talks are ongoing.

Several concrete things have emerged from these consultations. The first is the acceptance by the MOH of the

ORA's rheumatoid arthritis application form. This form, now available at <http://www.rheum.ca/en/> on the ORA page, will be the submission form used by all the pharmaceutical companies and will be accepted from rheumatologists as well. It is hoped that this form will become the main submission form for all, and new forms for Ankylosing Spondylitis and Psoriatic Arthritis are also in development.

The Ministry of Health is aiming for a **2 week turnaround** time on EAP applications for biologics and it is hoped that with one form used by all, that that goal might be easier to attain.

A recent practice audit by Dr. Thorne revealed that

before using the new form, he was getting more than half the forms returned looking for further information and with a 9-12 week turnaround time. With the new form, 4 were approved in 4 weeks, and 4 in 5 weeks, with no returned for more information.

Want to get more involved?

Anyone interested in participating as a Ministry of Health consultant, including **external reviewer** is encouraged to submit an application (found on the ORA page of the CRA website, <http://www.rheum.ca/en/>)

Patient Toolkit

The Ontario Biologics Registry has produced a Patient Toolkit to assist our patient in understanding the Exceptional Access Program (EAP) and how they as consumers can become more involved in their ongoing access to prescribed medications.

The document explains the

process of application to the EAP plus the Trillium drug plan. It also contains the contact information for all the biologic drug manufacturers and an explanation of how this whole process is supposed to work.

This is a great tool which will empower patient in this often difficult process and help to explain to them the rules and responsibilities of all involved parties.

The toolkit can be accessed from the CRA website

(<http://www.rheum.ca/en/>)

Highlights

- ORA MEETS WITH MOH
- NEW FORM FOR RA SUBMISSIONS TO EAP
- RHEUMATOLOGY OHIP FEES TO INCREASE IN OCTOBER 2009
- NEXT ORA AGM MAY 28-30, 2010 AT TABOO RESORT IN MUSKOKA

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OHIP FEE INCREASE!

Consults increase 8.2%

Followups increase 10.2%

ORA ANNUAL

GENERAL

MEETING 2010

MAY 28-30 AT
TABOO RESORT,
MUSKOKA.

RESERVE THE
DATE!!



Taboo Resort is our meeting place for the ORA AGM May 28-30, 2010

OMA Update

Dr. Philip Baer continues to do an excellent job as our Ontario Medical Association section representative, enhancing the position of Rheumatology at the provincial level. Fees will increase on October 1, 2009 and will favour rheumatologists over most other groups.

In summary, **consultation fees will increase 8.2%, followup fees increase 10.2%** and the G382 fee code (monitor chemotherapy

lab work) will increase 7.1%. We should also see new codes for certain joint and bursa aspirations. The new limit on G371 joint injections will increase from 3 to 5.

Full details of these increases and more will be available soon from the OMA so watch for fax and email updates, check the OMA website and check with your billing software provider.

Dr. Baer is actively working the Rheumatology section's submissions for October 2010. We are looking at increasing the number for diagnostic codes that qualify for E078 (such as vasculitis) and also for tray fees to cover the cost of supplies for joint injections/aspirations done in the office setting.

ORA AGM 2009

The Ontario Rheumatology Associations' Annual General Meeting was successfully held at Taboo resort in Muskoka in May 2009 with record attendance. Over 200 rheumatologists, trainees, family and pharmaceutical partners enjoyed a weekend of learning and collegiality. This year, the meeting also contained the Mock Oral for Trainees

which allowed future rheumatologists to meet their peers outside of university settings.

Dr Rachel Shupak was awarded the 2009 Award of Distinction for her contribution to Ontario Rheumatology, which was a well deserved honour.

Remember, your ORA dues will be included in your Annual CRA dues notice, a bargain at \$50. ORA membership gives a discount for Registration for the ORA AGM 2010 May 28-30 @ Taboo Resort.

Upcoming Meetings

The next Ontario Rheumatology Association Annual General meeting will be held again at Taboo Resort in Muskoka on **May 28-30, 2010**, so be sure to mark that date.

Nominations for the 2010 Rheumatology Award of Distinction are now being accepted. This award is to acknowledge someone who has contributed in a meaningful way to the Rheumatology community in Ontario. The nomination forms can be found on the ORA page of the CRA website [http://](http://www.rheum.ca/en/)

www.rheum.ca/en/

The next ORA executive retreat will be held on November 7, 2009 in Toronto and an update of that meeting will be available in the ORA winter newsletter.

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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.

Newsletter Comments?
Questions? Email me at
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ORA Executive Members 2009

President: Dr Carter Thorne

Vice President: Dr. Philip Baer

Secretary/Treasurer: Dr. Vandana Ahluwalia

Members: Dr. Alf Cividino

Dr. Felix Leung

Dr. Glen Griffiths

Dr. Jane Purvis

Dr. Janet Pope

Dr. Susanne Benseler

Dr. Earl Silverman

Dr. Heather McDonald-Blumer

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Exceptional Access Program Subcommittee

Dr. Carter Thorne

Dr. Alf Cividino

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Dr. Vandana Ahluwalia

Mr. Denis Morrice

Administrative Assistant: Mrs. Phyllis Pardetti

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