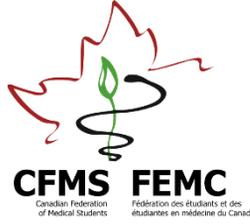
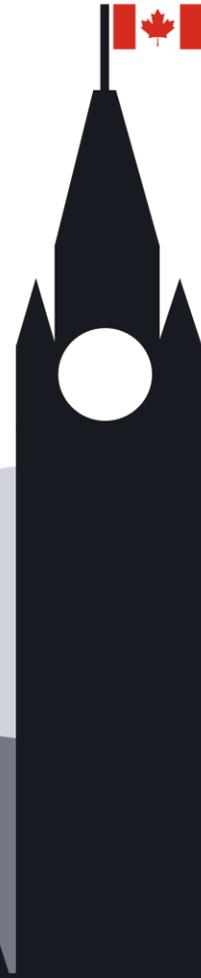


2019



**CFMS**

DAY OF **ACTION**



**SENIORS CARE & AGING**

**FOLLOW-UP SUMMARY REPORT**

February 4, 2019  
Ottawa, ON

Canadian Federation of Medical Students  
Fédération des étudiants et des étudiantes en médecine du Canada  
[www.cfms.org](http://www.cfms.org)



## About the CFMS

The Canadian Federation of Medical Students (CFMS) is the national organization that represents more than 8,000 medical students from 15 medical schools across Canada. Our mandate as the national voice of Canadian medical students is to connect, support, and represent our membership as they learn to serve patients and society.

As the organization that represents the voices of Canadian medical students at the national level, we regularly engage with policymakers at all levels on the most pressing issues in healthcare facing the country. Through our Government Affairs and Advocacy portfolio, we research, develop, and debate health policy and work to advocate for changes that have concrete, tangible benefits for medical students, patients, and society, and to ensure that medical students have a voice in shaping the future of Canada's healthcare system.

*We are tomorrow's physicians leading for health today.*



# Table of Contents

Introduction .....	4
CFMS National Day of Action .....	4
Purpose of the Report.....	5
CFMS National Day of Action 2019 Topic Selection.....	6
Why Seniors Care and Aging? .....	8
Seniors Care and Aging .....	9
Background .....	9
Process .....	10
Consultation .....	10
Findings .....	11
CFMS Policy Recommendations.....	13
Summary of Activities .....	14
Day 1 .....	14
CFMS Updates.....	14
National Government Affairs and Advocacy Roundtable and Global Health Advocates Meeting.....	16
Day 2 .....	18
Territorial Acknowledgement: Verna McGregor .....	18
Opening Remarks.....	18
Taking Your Own Leadership Journey: Dr. Gigi Osler .....	19
Delegate Training .....	20
Dr. Frank Molnar .....	21
Lessons Learned in Advocating Effectively for Seniors: Dr. Samir Sinha .....	21
Political Action Training 2.0: Kelsey Shein and Holly Duggan .....	22
Day 3 .....	23
Meetings with Policymakers .....	23
Follow-Up.....	24
Meeting Results .....	24
Delegate Feedback.....	25
In the Media.....	27
Priorities Moving Forward .....	30
Acknowledgements.....	31
Conclusion.....	33

# Introduction

## **CFMS National Day of Action**

The Canadian Federation of Medical Students' (CFMS) National Day of Action is an annual event organized by the CFMS where medical students from across Canada gather on Parliament Hill in Ottawa to engage with Members of Parliament (MPs), Senators, and other federal policymakers on a pressing topic in Canadian healthcare and to advocate for evidence-based policy recommendations that will have a positive impact on the health of Canadians.

Formerly known as “National Lobby Day”, the National Day of Action is amongst the largest annual events organized by the CFMS and an avenue through which medical students in Canada engage in advocacy at the systems level. The topic of each Day of Action is carefully selected to address an issue of paramount importance to Canadian healthcare that medical students support and believe is an issue that is worthwhile. Previous topics have included: Access to Medicines (2014), Pharmacare in Canada (2016), The Opioids Crisis in Canada (2017), and Indigenous Mental Wellness (2018).

Political engagement from medical students in previous Days of Action have led to tangible and meaningful change. Through the organization's efforts in advocating for a National Pharmacare Strategy in 2014 and 2016, the CFMS was invited to testify as a witness in the House Standing Committee on Health (HESA) study on Pharmacare, which subsequently led to the creation of the newly-announced federal advisory council on Pharmacare to be headed by former Ontario Health Minister Eric Hoskins. Efforts in 2017 to urge the federal government to do more to address upstream causes of opioids use resulted in the CFMS being added as a signatory to the Joint Statements of Action to Address the Opioid Crisis and a member of the National Opioids Response Partners Team. Beyond these incremental steps in advancing Canadian health policy, the Day of Action serves an important role in helping shape medical students into leaders, and into the passionate and effective health advocates of today and tomorrow.



## Purpose of the Report

The purpose of this follow-up summary report is to provide a synopsis of the 2019 CFMS National Day of Action on Seniors Care and Aging for the CFMS membership, stakeholders, and the public.

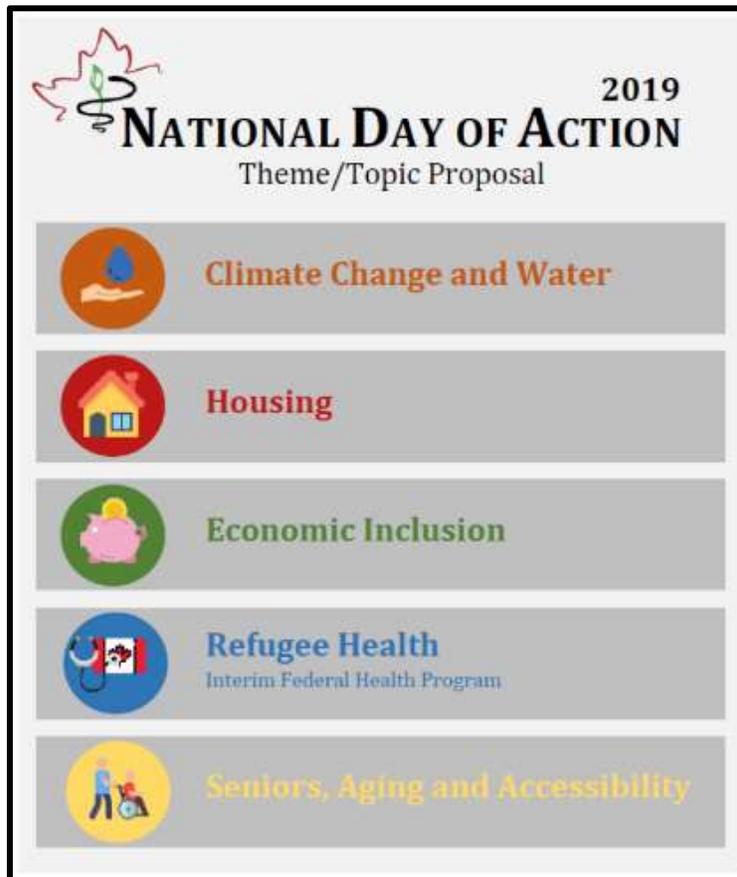
This report will provide background on the topic of *seniors care and aging*, including our specific policy recommendations and the process that was undertaken to arrive at our proposed recommendations. This report will summarize the activities and proceedings of the sessions during the Day of Action weekend and provide some important statistics on student participation and the degree of engagement we had with federal policymakers. Finally, the report will describe the follow-up actions that have been taken to date following the Day of Action, and our plans moving forward.

Publication and dissemination of this report will aid in the principles and values of accountability and transparency that the CFMS pursues in its health advocacy work.

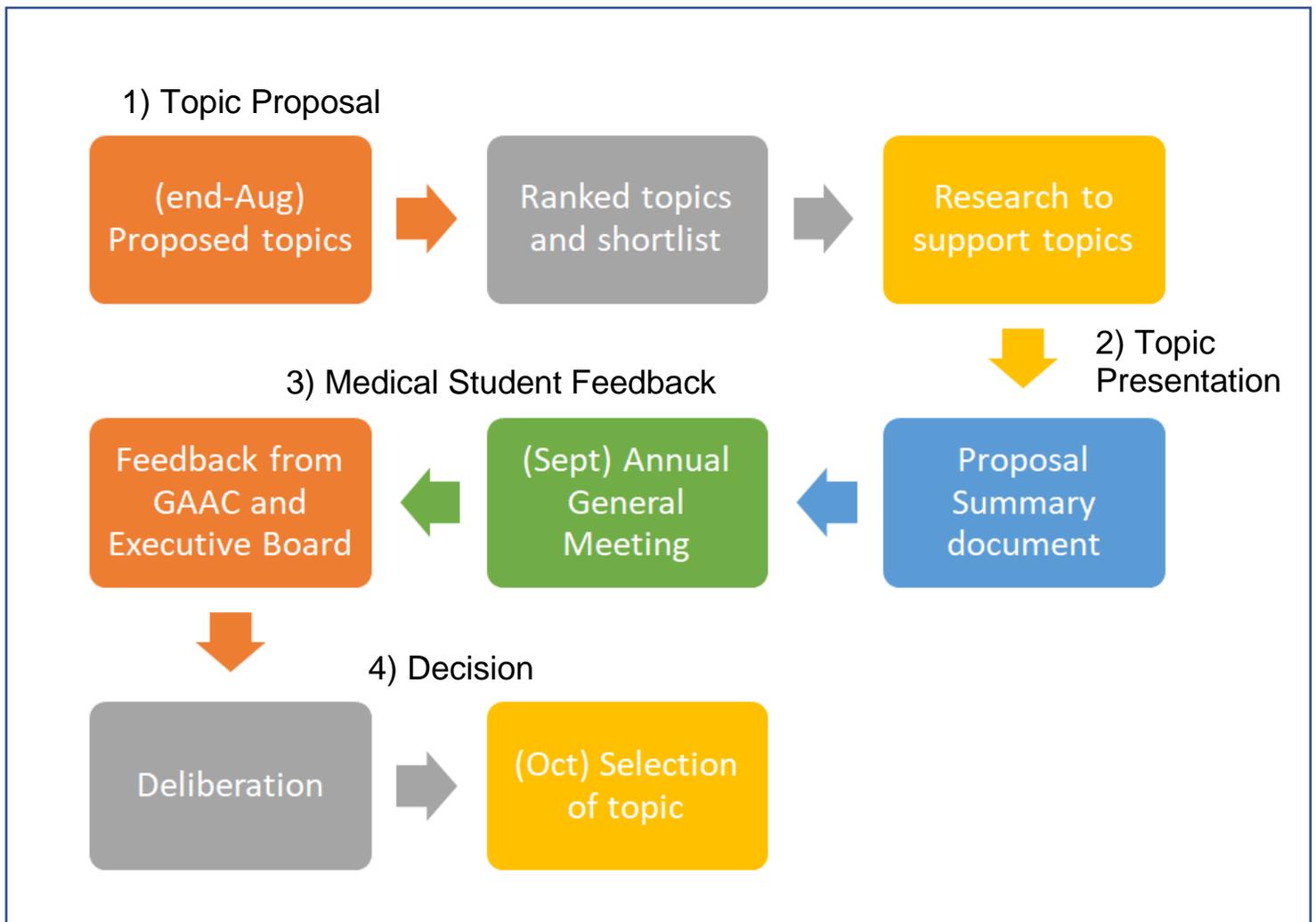


## CFMS National Day of Action 2019 Topic Selection

The topic for the 2019 CFMS National Day of Action was “Seniors Care and Aging”. Seniors care, aging, and accessibility was amongst the five topics shortlisted by the Day of Action Topic Selection Committee as a proposal for the 2019 CFMS National Day of Action. The other topics included (1) Climate Change and Water, (2) Housing, (3) Economic Inclusion, and (4) Refugee Health.



The Day of Action Topic Selection Committee was made up of 8 medical learners from across Canada who apply to be part of the committee, selected by the CFMS Nomination Committee. Through a series of four meetings, the Topic Selection Committee followed a four-step process: 1) Topic Proposal, 2) Topic Presentation, 3) CFMS Member Feedback, 4) Decision.



### 1) Topic Proposal

The Topic Selection Committee utilized topics proposed by CFMS members at the CFMS 2018 Spring General Meeting, and topic proposals received through a national call-out, to short-list and rank 12 topics.

### 2) Topic Presentation

Further research was done to provide context for the top five ranked topics and summarized in a topic proposal document that was then shared with CFMS members.

### 3) CFMS Member Feedback

A small working group was formed at the CFMS 2019 Annual General Meeting, allowing CFMS members to provide feedback on the five short-listed topics. Further feedback was provided by the CFMS Government Affairs and Advocacy Roundtable members and the CFMS Board of Directors.

### 4) Decision

CFMS Member Feedback was received by the Topic Selection Committee and guided the decision-making process. Three criteria were used to decide the final topic: 1) Is the topic within the domain of the federal government, 2) Is the topic of current political interest, and 3) Is the topic relevant and interesting to Canadian medical students. The decision was

finalized by the CFMS Director of Government Affairs and the CFMS National Officer of Political Action.

### **Why Seniors Care and Aging?**

The federal election in 2015 was the first time in Canadian history that each of the major parties' platforms addressed a plan for seniors. With an upcoming federal election in 2019, we saw this as a good opportunity to renew this commitment and to advocate for a national seniors strategy. Aging was deliberately included in the title of this year's Day of Action to acknowledge that in order to provide good care to seniors, we need to support individuals throughout the lifespan to promote aging in a dignified and healthy way. Planning and designing communities that can support healthy aging will significantly benefit every member of society. This is why the 2019 CFMS National Day of Action focused on advocating for federal health policy that positively supports healthy aging with dignity.



# Seniors Care and Aging

## Background

A 90-year-old female living independently in a retirement residence who enjoys bowling two nights a week, playing bingo, and visiting friends. A 78-year-old newcomer male living in an inter-generational home with depression after the passing of his siblings, mistaken for dementia. A 67-year-old with multiple comorbidities requiring assistance for all activities of daily living (ADLs), living in a long-term care home.



One of the challenges of planning for an aging population is the heterogeneity in our needs and abilities as we age. Unsurprisingly, the prevalence of chronic conditions increases as we age, which accounts for a disproportionate usage of the healthcare system.<sup>1</sup> Compared to adults ages 18 to 24, individuals 65 years-old and older were 4 times more likely to report having a chronic condition, and about 1.5 times more likely compared to the 45-64 age group.<sup>1</sup> The result is that the average cost of healthcare for the average senior is 4.4 times greater per year than the rest of the population, at \$12,000 per year compared to \$2,700 per year.<sup>2</sup> This accounts for nearly half of the healthcare dollars, despite seniors only making up one-fifth of the population.<sup>2</sup>



A higher prevalence of chronic conditions is closely related to increased medications. Statistics show that seniors with 1-2 conditions take an average of 3-4 prescription medications, which increases to an average of 6 prescription medications in the group of seniors with 3 or more conditions.<sup>1</sup> For the first time ever in Canada, the number of seniors exceeded the number of children aged 14 and younger.<sup>3</sup> This is a positive reflection that advances in public

health, medical innovation and social supports have allowed people to live longer and healthier. Given the opportunity, an aging population has a lifetime of knowledge, experiences, skills and history to share with the rest of society.

Aging is a continuum impacted by care, services, policies, and the social determinants of health. Planning and designing communities that can support healthy aging will significantly benefit every member of society.

1. Canadian Institute for Health Information. 2011.
2. The Conference Board of Canada. Meeting the Care Needs of Canada's Aging Population. 2018;(July).
3. Grenier E. Canadian seniors now outnumber children for 1st time, 2016 census shows. *Canadian Broadcasting Corporation*.
4. Sanmartin C. Research Highlights on Health and Aging. Statistics Canada.
5. Government of Canada. *Action for Seniors Report*.; 2014.



## Process

Seniors care and aging has been highly advocated on by many prominent groups and active individuals. To amplify these voices, CFMS coordinated medical students across the country to identify and engage with community leaders and health experts on the topic of *seniors care and aging*. The purpose of this process was to learn and receive insight from those that see and understand first-hand, the gaps impacting seniors, and how we, as medical trainees, can add our voices as allies to a growing conversation. Additionally, the Day of Action Research Committee, conducted research by reviewing both academic literature and grey literature, to understand the political and social landscape of *seniors care and aging* in the Canadian context.

## Consultation

Medical trainees connected with stakeholders in several ways, including in-person meetings, phone calls, and communication through email. Two general questions were posed in each meeting: 1) What are some specific issues in *seniors care and aging* that are of relevance to your organization? 2) What can be done at the federal level to address these issues? Medical trainees were also encouraged to follow the natural flow of the conversation leading to the self-emergence of several themes and topics, leading to a comprehensive conclusion on *seniors care and aging*.

Thirty-one stakeholders across Canada were captured in this process, representing different perspectives. Following each consultation, medical trainees submitted a report with notes from the meeting to the Consultation Review Committee. These reports were compiled and analyzed using an inductive approach to identify emerging concepts, insights,

and understandings from patterns in the qualitative data. Five primary themes with subcomponents were identified.

## Findings

*Seniors Care and aging* provides an opportunity for us to rethink accessibility in our systems and use innovation to redesign a society that promotes wellness, quality of life, dignity, and choice throughout the lifespan, resulting in healthier senior years and supported caregivers. Through our consultation process, several recommendations were made by stakeholders to different groups. To medical students and physicians, we are encouraged to share personal stories to promote change, to become comfortable with and initiate discussions on end-of-life and advanced care planning with patients, and to integrate social services in a clinical setting for patients. Recommendations were also made to each level of government - federal, provincial, and municipal.



Five major themes were identified, reflecting the values that underpin the various concepts discussed by stakeholders, which are inter-related in many ways: 1) Wellness, 2) Quality of Life and Dignity, 3) Choice, 4) Innovation, and 5) Support.

### 1) Wellness

Our stakeholders emphasized that the focus of seniors' care should be on preservation and health promotion throughout the lifespan as an important way to achieve wellness in the late stages of life. To achieve this, attention to the social determinants of health are critical in the development of policy. In addition, comprehensive community health resources including oral care, and appropriate primary care with interdisciplinary teams and universal pharmacare are important aspects to addressing care, especially for those living with complex health issues.



## 2) *Quality of Life and Dignity*

Stakeholders reminded us that even on a policy level, we need to treat the person and not the disease. Caring for an individual should take into consideration the desires of a person for a good quality of life and dignified aging. Stakeholders call for us to reimagine traditional health care delivery that prioritizes people and not the convenience of the system. While home care has been championed as a model of care to support aging in the community, we need to modify these systems to account for the unique socioeconomic barriers of each individual. As a society we need to address stigma and ageism, and address social isolation in the community and in long-term care homes with opportunities for meaningful interactions.



## 3) *Choice*

When designing both physical infrastructure and policies for healthy aging, considerations for accessibility and equity can go a long way to preserving choice as a privilege that we can continue to enjoy as we age. The concept of 8-to-80 cities (cities designed for 8-year-olds but also accessible for 80-year-olds) promotes accessible spaces for all. Honest and truthful discussions about end-of-life care along with accessible palliative care programs offers choices for individuals in their last stage of life. Universal pharmacare, coupled with adequate medication reviews, and deprescribing medications are important aspects of allowing individuals the choice to decide 'what matters most' in their lives.

## 4) *Innovation*

Innovation is the support of creativity, new ideas, and new methods. Our consultations revealed conflicting thoughts around the idea of technology. While technology can be used to support independence, as well as greater connectivity through the integration of health care management, we must be careful not to solely quantify individuals. Another aspect of innovation is funding and promoting research to better understand the effectiveness of current programs for seniors, as well as coordinate research for complex topics such as dementia.



## 5) *Support*

This theme consolidates stakeholders' insight on how we can support those that care for us as we age. This includes promoting the profession of personal support workers and recognizing and properly supporting unpaid caregivers. It is also important to realize the gendered work of care, and a gendered lens should be used to understand the burden and impact of seniors' care at home and within the system.

## CFMS Policy Recommendations

Every Canadian deserves to age with dignity, with access to necessary supports and appropriate resources. As such, the Canadian Federation of Medical Students (CFMS) calls upon all Members of Parliament to:

1. Commit to targeted funding and development of a **National Seniors Strategy** for the 2019 Federal Election.
2. Commit to the development of a **national evidence-based formulary** as a first step towards implementing a universal, comprehensive, and cost-effective **National Pharmacare Program**. Work in collaboration with national experts to promote targeted deprescribing and minimize polypharmacy.
3. Support national leadership on making full use of quality indicators to enhance the quality of and access to **home care, palliative care, and community care** at the next Federal/Provincial/Territorial Ministers Responsible for Seniors Forum.



National leadership from the federal government on seniors' care would tell Canadians that "we care about you as you age, and we are here to support you and older loved ones". A National Seniors Strategy would coordinate best-practices, and targeted funding would equalize care across the country. In anticipation for a growing senior population, it is timely to prioritize seniors care and aging. It offers us an opportunity to be proactive and intentional in the care, services and policies designed. With foresight and planning we can support healthy aging throughout the lifespan for a diverse population, allowing us to live well into our older years in a dignified way that is acceptable to us and sustainable for the health care system.

As medical students, we believe that the federal government has the leadership, infrastructure and resources necessary to have a real impact on seniors' care and aging.

# Summary of Activities

## Day 1: Saturday, February 2, 2019

On day one of the Day of Action weekend, updates and discussions were provided by the CFMS on important topics related to the Day of Action, including how the topic is selected, and how the Day of Action campaign is developed. The purpose is to reflect on what we do leading up to the Day of Action, and how we can do it better, and what we can do moving forward to optimize our impact as advocates.

## CFMS Updates

CFMS President, **Stephanie Smith**, and Director of Government Affairs, **Yipeng Ge**, welcome delegates to Ottawa and the Day of Action training weekend. Stephanie shared three lessons that she has learned from previous participation in advocacy: 1) Leadership – recognizing the leadership of each delegate, 2) Advocating for change – learning strategies to inspire and motivate others, and to be effective changemakers, and 3) Connection – the importance of understanding the perspective of others.



CFMS National Officer of Political Action, **Linda Lam**, and Director of Government Affairs, **Yipeng Ge**, led a discussion on how the topic for the Day of Action is selected. This year the CFMS attempted to formalize the topic selection process and was the first year that a topic selection committee was formed. The topic selection committee was made up of 8 CFMS members, representing 5 Canadian medical schools. It was proposed at this presentation, that in the future, the final topic should be voted on at the CFMS Annual General Meeting, rather than decided on by the topic selection committee. Delegates were overall supportive of this new proposed process, and appreciated the transparency of the

process. A noted challenge was whether we use the Day of Action to respond to a current topic on the political radar, or to be persistent on a topic previously advocated for or not necessarily on the political radar. The group decided that this is an ongoing discussion, and it depends on the political climate, student choice, and the topic itself. Many delegates brought up an interest to engage stakeholders in the topic selection process, to refine the topics proposed for the Day of Action.



CFMS National Officer of Health Policy, **David Wiercigorch**, provided updates from the Committee on Health Policy. The Committee on Health Policy is made up of 18 CFMS members, representing 8 different schools. The committee has been in the process of reviewing existing policy papers, developed a CFMS Guiding Document for the position paper process, and are piloting a new feedback process for the CFMS Spring General Meeting 2019. The committee is also looking to collaborate on a new *Medical Student Advocacy Initiative*, to increase the visibility of advocacy initiatives by medical trainees and promote collaboration and the sharing of best practices. Upcoming projects for the committee are the development of the Federal Election Strategy Primer, and the creation of the Child Health Task Force.

CFMS Director of Global Health, **Michelle Quaye**, provided updates on the Global Health Program. Task forces and committees within the Global Health portfolio include, the Health and Environment Adaptive Response Task Force, IFMSA Exchanges Task Force, and Partnerships Committee which liaise with and share IFMSA opportunities. Michelle provided information on what the IFMSA is, and how it represents 1.3 million medical trainees from across the world, is made up of 6 standing committees, hosts a number of meetings and events, and partner with the United Nations and the World Health Organization.



CFMS National Officer of Human Rights and Peace, **Asha Behdinan**, provided updates from the Global Health Advocates and their plan for the upcoming year. The CFMS Global Health Advocates are working on a number of local initiatives including pre-clerkship electives, awareness campaigns on MAID, mental health and addiction, poverty and health, podcast series, political advocacy through municipal and provincial lobbying, global health carousel, anti-oppression training, global health conferences, and plan on engaging in post-Day of Action activities. Global Health Advocates are involved with the Day of Action consultation process, the CFMS Climate Change and Health Network and CFMS Health and Environment Adaptive Response Task Force. Global Health Advocates are working on bringing a version of the IFMSA SCORP camp to Canada, to equip medical trainees with the skills needed to train others on human rights, by 2020. Additionally, they are working on a debate series campaign that would live broadcast debates on controversial topics.



### **National Government Affairs and Advocacy Roundtable and Global Health Advocates Meeting**

In the afternoon, CFMS GAAC representatives and CFMS GHA representatives met with their respective teams. These in person meetings facilitated by **Debbie Brace** and **Asha Behdinan**, were productive meetings, where representatives shared best practices, new initiatives, and discussed challenges in advocacy at a local level. These meetings were also an excellent opportunity for representatives to collaborate on advocacy initiatives. Representatives felt inspired by their peers in these meetings, and left feeling motivated to continue their work at their own schools.

### **Moving Forward from the Day of Action 2019**

Day of Action delegates had an opportunity to formulate a plan on how they will continue the momentum from the Day of Action at their own schools. Some ideas included:

- Collaborating with geriatric interest groups
- Lunch talks with a speaker from a field that works with the geriatric population
- Advocating for subsidized housing program for students/elderly
- Interdisciplinary trivia night to develop skills in deprescribing and recognizing polypharmacy,

- Singing carols at a seniors home
- Translating federal asks to a provincial level
- Extending the consultation process by talking to elderly
- Letter writing campaign to Members of Parliament
- Information booth
- Improving advocacy skills with training
- Follow-up meetings with Members of Parliament
- Tour of long-term care facility
- Skit night
- Skills night i.e. approach to falls, approach to delirium
- Candidate debate at time of federal election – incorporate seniors care and aging to questions
- Advocating to medical school to recruit senior patients for skilled clinicians course/clinical skills course
- Valentines Day Card writing for seniors
- Advocate for the development of an interprofessional module on seniors care



## Day 2: Sunday, February 3, 2019

On day two of the Day of Action Training, delegates were addressed by speakers, trained on the content of the backgrounder and asks, and had a chance to meet with peers in preparation for meetings with Members of Parliament and other policymakers.

### **Territorial Acknowledgement: Verna McGregor**

Delegates were traditionally greeted by Verna McGregor through song and prayer. It was acknowledged that the day's activities were to respectfully take place on the traditional unceded territories of the Algonquin Anishnaabeg people.

### **Opening Remarks**

CFMS President, **Stephanie Smith**, welcomed delegates to the Day of Action and provided some inspirational words. CFMS Director of Government Affairs, **Yipeng Ge**, provided some history around the CFMS Day of Action. The Day of Action has been around for 20 years, initially medical trainees advocated for issues that affected them directly, such as the cost of tuition, and diversity. Over the years the scope of the topic has expanded with the changing trajectory of medical trainees and their passion for social accountability and knowledge of social determinants of health. Additional topics that medical trainees have advocated for on this platform include, two-tiered health care, rural access to healthcare, access to housing, cost-effective universal pharmacare plan, health and human resources, health for refugees, opioid crisis, and Indigenous mental wellness, to name a few. Yipeng described that this process continues to evolve and we all have a role to play in shaping it.



### **Taking Your Own Leadership Journey: Dr. Gigi Osler (Speaker Address)**

Canadian Medical Association (CMA) president, **Dr. Gigi Osler**, shared her own leadership journey and spoke about the CMA senior strategy. Dr. Osler believes that diversity in the workforce should better reflect the diversity of the patients, and there is a growing body of evidence that links increase in diversity to better health outcomes. “More diversity widens our thinking and provides a deeper understanding of our patients” – Dr. Gigi Osler.



Dr. Osler shared her own path to the CMA, reflecting on how the extent of her leadership in medical school was being a social rep which was responsible for planning events. Throughout the years she became head of the department, and became chair of leadership at Doctor's Manitoba, but she was never an elected president at Doctor's Manitoba, and was never on the board. She was surprised when two years ago, she was approached to run for president elect. “Me? Why me? Who would vote for me?” She described that she was terrified to become president, until she realized the opportunity that the platform would offer her. She found strength in realizing that using this voice, she would be able to advocate for things that she was passionate about, and that convinced her to run. The take home message, “continue to develop yourself and your leadership skills. If at this stage in your career you know what you want to do, then do it with integrity and passion. People will see through it if you're just doing it for yourself. Opportunities for leadership and advocacy will come to you, sometimes when you least expect it. You need to have the confidence that you will overcome the imposter syndrome”.

In regards to the CMA seniors strategy, part of the message that the CMA tries to get across, is to challenge the idea that seniors' care is something that only affects seniors. Only 19% of our population are 65 years or older, yet they use 65% of our health care dollars. As that group gets older, the percentage of healthcare dollars needed will grow. In the fall 2018, the CMA made a budget submission proposing that a \$21 billion demographic top-up

be introduced in healthcare transfer payments to the provinces and territories. This would take into account the growing seniors population and the dollars that would be required. If we had more homecare and long-term care beds, that would save money, because an acute care bed is 7x more expensive than a long-term care bed, and 20x more expensive than keeping patients in their homes! Even if you are 20, 30, or 40, helping seniors, helps you! It is relevant to all of us! Last summer, a key CMA recommendation was fulfilled when the prime minister created the position of the federal minister of seniors. Nationally, there has been some movement on the creation of a National Seniors Strategy. A report, *Advancing Inclusion and Quality of Life of Seniors*, tabled March 2018, outlined steps to creating a national seniors strategy. The CMA continues to advocate for seniors care and aging at the international, national, and local levels. If you are interested in getting more involved with the CMA, health policy, and advocacy, get connected through the CMA ambassador program.

## Delegate Training



National Officer of Political Action, **Linda Lam**, and Research Committee members, **Chantal Phillips** and **Jessica Froehlich**, prepared delegates for their meetings with policymakers by presenting the backgrounder presentation. Key guiding principles shared by the team include: reframing how we talk about seniors care and aging – avoid talking about it as a problem or issue, rather reframe it as an opportunity and something to embrace; use inclusive language, for example “as we age”; and finally to be dynamic, get to know who you are speaking to and tailor the message so that it is most relevant to them. The presentation included a brief background on: why aging is a priority; demographic

information; the role of the federal government, and existing federal action and legislation; findings from the stakeholder consultations, a rural and Indigenous perspective on seniors care and aging; examples of evidence-based interventions; other advocacy efforts to date; and our policy recommendations.

**Dr. Frank Molnar (Speaker Address)**

Dr. Frank Molnar is a specialist in geriatric medicine, at the Ottawa Hospital, assistant professor of medicine at the University of Ottawa, co-chair of the regional geriatric programs of Ontario, and president of the Canadian Geriatrics Society.

Dr. Molnar spoke on how seniors care affects us all, “better seniors’ care means better access to health care for Canadians of all ages”. He provided delegates with his feedback on our policy recommendations, including strengths, weaknesses, threats, and opportunities, for each of the asks. He emphasized the importance of ongoing connections, and that we are here for the long game, not merely for the quick wins. “Do not view this as a one-time event, but rather an important pillar of your future career (advocacy skills takes decades to refine). Continue to build ongoing trusting relationships (over years), with people who have the authority to make a difference”.



**Lessons Learned in Advocating Effectively for Seniors: Dr. Samir Sinha (Speaker Address)**

Dr. Samir Sinha, is the Peter and Shelagh Godsoe Chair in Geriatrics and Director Geriatrics at the Sinai Health System and the University Health Network in Toronto. Additionally, he is the provincial lead of the Ontario Seniors Strategy, and an assistant professor of medicine at the University of Toronto and the John Hopkins University School of Medicine.

Dr. Sinha challenged our perceptions of an aging population, whether we thought that it was a triumph or a tsunami. Canada’s population of 65 years and older makes up 16.9% of the population, but accounts for 42% of health care spending, and 59% of overall days in hospital. About 7,500 Canadians are stuck each day in the hospital, and the annual cost of waiting to go elsewhere



amounts to \$2.4 billion. Amongst the top system barriers to integrating care for older adults include lack of training for how to care for the elderly and the siloed work of our system. He asked how many of us plan on ending up in a long-term care facility when we grow old. No hands went up. He made the point of, why do we invest so much money into long-term care beds, if people don't want to be there. We can improve sustainability of our system by rather investing in supportive housing, home care, and community care. "Our dilemma is in the way in which our cities, communities, and health care systems are currently designed, resourced, organized and delivered, often disadvantages older adults with chronic health issues. As Canadians, our care needs, preferences, and values are evolving as a society, with increasing numbers of us wanting to age in place". We have a



choice to make about our future, and a National Seniors Strategy could "provide us exactly the focus and commitment we need to ensure Canada can become the best country in which to grow up and grow old".

### **Political Action Training 2.0: Kelsey Shein and Holly Duggan (Speaker Address)**

Kelsey Shein and Holly Duggan, from the CMA Political Advocacy Team, led an engaging and interactive political action training that provided delegates with practical advice on how delegates might handle their meetings. They provided an overview on the federal political landscape, shared tools to gauge the work of the government. With regards to practical advice for the meetings, practice, practice, practice, be



clear on what you want the MP's commitment on, and be honest and credible. Some tips for communications included bringing the conversation back to your agenda using strategic transition phrases, ask questions, avoid jargon, and share stories.

### Day 3: Monday, February 4, 2019

#### Meetings with Policymakers

On Monday, February 4<sup>th</sup>, 76 medical student delegates had 56 meetings with members of parliament, across the three major federal political parties, including meetings with Ministers, including the Minister of Seniors, Minister of Health, Minister of Veteran Affairs, Minister of Labour, and Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations. In groups of 2-4, delegates outlined to policymakers the context of seniors care and aging in Canada, the opportunities that this group has to offer, and our three policy recommendations that would help Canadians to age with dignity, and with access to necessary supports and appropriate resources.



Meetings lasted throughout the day, from early morning until late afternoon. Each individual delegate met with on average 2-3 policymakers throughout the day. Many had the opportunity to attend the day's Question Period. Following each meeting, delegates reported back with their impressions of how the meeting went, listed any follow-up action that was required, and relayed any difficult questions that they were asked during the meeting.

This year, the CFMS financially supported 5 medical student delegates with a MD Financial Management Travel Award to attend the Day of Action in Ottawa.





## Follow-Up

### Meeting Results

Overall, our meetings with Members of Parliament and policymakers were well received. Of the 56 meetings that medical students had, we received feedback on 52 meetings, 50 of these meetings agreed that seniors care and aging should be a priority. MPs and policymakers were generally, very welcoming and open to meeting with delegates from the CFMS, and agreeable to our three asks. Ask #2 on a national evidence-based formulary as a step towards universal pharmacare and deprescribing, was met with some controversy. Some individuals believed that there was already enough work being done with regards to pharmacare (2/52), and others were not agreeable (3/52) to the ask and believed that it was more of a provincial-level responsibility. MPs and policymakers were engaged in the meetings and some offered personal stories on their experience as a caregiver, the work they have done to advocate for seniors care, and empathetic to the need for a National Seniors Strategy.

A number of MPs committed to bringing up this topic in their caucus meetings, writing a letter supporting our policy proposals to the Minister of Health Ginette Petitpas-Taylor, and Minister of Seniors Filomena Tassi. Others agreed to present a SO-31, write an article on the importance of seniors care and aging in



3:25 AM · 3 Feb 2019 from Ottawa, Ontario

14 Retweets 29 Likes

their local magazine, and include home care on their householder. Additionally, some MPs agreed to have follow-up meetings with our delegates, or speak to medical students at their local medical school.

## Delegate Feedback

Following the Day of Action weekend, we received feedback from 14 delegates through a survey. Majority of the delegates who responded were either very satisfied (57.1%) or satisfied (28.6%) with the training and meetings, as a whole, and were very satisfied (28.6%) or satisfied (57.1%) with the usefulness of the materials. Our speakers, Dr. Gigi Osler, Dr. Frank Molnar, Dr. Samir Sinha, and the political action training by Kelsey Shein and Holly Duggan from the CMA Political Advocacy team, were very well received by our delegates.

Additionally, majority of the delegates felt prepared for their meetings with MPs (very prepared 28.6%, prepared 42.9%, neutral 21.4%, not prepared 7.1%). Delegates felt that it was very empowering to feel heard, while having the opportunity to discuss an important topic with friendly and receptive MPs. Some delegates noted that some of the MPs that they met with had direct influence on our asks and felt that it was unlikely that the asks would progress through these avenues. Delegates really enjoyed attending question period.



 **Jane Philpott**   
@janephilpott 

Great to meet you. Nice to know so many medical students are taking an active interest in health policy.

 **Sureka Pavalagantharajah** @SurekaPav  
Had an amazing discussion with the Honourable @janephilpott today about seniors care and aging as a followup to CFMS Lobby Day! Happy to learn that her office has information about resources for seniors and their caregivers readily available #SeniorsCare ...

10:58 AM - 22 Feb 2019

7 Retweets 28 Likes



Specific recommendations for improvement on the weekend included: 1) Providing a “political crash course” (including government structures, decision-making, what MPs do, avenues for political advocacy), 2) Providing more explicit and direct links between the research and asks, 3) Narrowing the scope of the asks, 4) Restructuring the day so that the background information and political advocacy training are earlier in the day.

More comprehensive feedback was provided by CFMS-MD Financial Management travel award winners that encompassed four themes.

### 1) Practical tools for advocacy

Delegates felt like the weekend provided them with practical tools for advocacy that they could use moving forward in their training. These practical tools included, how to use storytelling in advocacy, participating in the research process and developing tangible political advocacy, collaborating with other medical students across the country with a similar vision, and being inspired by the guest speakers of the weekend.



### 2) Meeting policy makers and MPs

Delegates felt that after the weekend they had a better understanding of government and learned how to communicate with MPs.

### 3) Embracing power

For many of the delegates, this weekend helped them to realize the platform that we have as future physicians, our ability to be heard and influence policy. They were empowered by the opportunity to represent their core values and unique experiences at a systemic level. Additionally, this weekend offered delegates the chance to explore their own reasons for wanting to get involved with advocacy, which strengthened their identity as advocates.

### 4) Advocating for seniors

As the Day of Action topic was on seniors care and aging, delegates felt like the weekend provided them with ideas for how they could provide quality care for seniors at both an individual and systems level. The weekend provided delegates with the opportunity to reflect on their own experiences and share stories as a tool for advocacy.



## In the Media

The #CFMSDayofAction and #SeniorsCare social media campaign was an incredibly successful tool in spreading our message and engaging CFMS members that were unable to join us in Ottawa. The CFMS Day of Action received much attention on social media by a number of leaders, including many MPs and Ministers.

**USask Medicine Dean**  
@USaskMedDean

in the latest #MyMD blog, @jess\_froehlich follows up on her experience during this year's @CFMSFEMC Day of Action to advocate for a national strategy for seniors care and aging: [bit.ly/2GRTQIH](http://bit.ly/2GRTQIH)



12:29 PM - 19 Feb 2019

**Bardish Chagger**  
@BardishKW

#LeadersToday are planning for their future! 2 of 76 @CFMSFEMC reps, @yipengGe, @tharshikaa\_t and I talked #SeniorsCare and aging & one just happens to be a #KWawesome local! We want to hear all voices and local voices matter.



3:40 PM - 4 Feb 2019

6 Retweets 20 Likes

**Danielle Penney** @DaniellePenney - Feb 4  
Highlight of the day! Meeting with the Minister of Seniors @FloemaSosaMP ) Excited to stay connected & continue the conversation around policies & actions to improve the lives of Canada's seniors. \*Caption @CFMSFEMC



11:00 AM - 4 Feb 2019

**Deb Schulte MP**  
@\_DetSchulte

Great discussion in my Parliamentary Hill office today with Raven, Jared and Jai; driven, young students from @CFMSFEMC discussing ways to advance federal health policies and #SeniorsCare & Aging



11:00 AM - 4 Feb 2019

**Joyce Murray** 梅諾高  
@joycemurray

Thank you to the @CFMSFEMC & @UBCmedicine students for taking time out of your busy schedules to come to #Ottawa and make sure we make good public policy for #seniors!



5:22 PM - 4 Feb 2019

2 Retweets 4 Likes

**Carolyn Bennett**  
@CarolynBennett

The @CFMSFEMC visited Ottawa today to discuss seniors care and aging. Always a pleasure to meet with such engaged, passionate students on topics that truly matter to Canadians #SeniorsCare #CFMADayofAction



1:01 PM - 4 Feb 2019

19 Retweets 18 Likes

**Francesco Sorbara MP**  
@francesco

A true pleasure to meet with our future #Canadian physicians, & discuss #seniors care, aging and the trends in our current #healthcare system. #homecare #palliativecare #communitycare #dayofaction #CFMS



**Rebecca Matthews**  
@ryen777

Heading to the Justice Building for our first meeting of the day! Excited to be meeting with fellow Newfoundlander @ChurenceRogers to talk about #SeniorsCare 🇨🇦 #CFMSDayOfAction @CFMSFEMC @\_nlma @MUNMed @MUNMedSoc



**Patty Hajdu** @PattyHajdu Following

I sat down with @CFMSFEMC students from @thenosm yesterday to discuss important issues affecting seniors in Canada. Our government, led by @FilomenaTassiMP, is committed to providing seniors with the support they need to enjoy a healthy retirement.



5:28 PM - 5 Feb 2019

4 Retweets 20 Likes

**Alexandra Mendes** @AlexandraMendes Follow

Avec les représentants de la @CFMSFEMC (Fédération des étudiants en médecine du Canada), qui nous sensibilisent aux défis d'un vieillissement en santé. Des propositions intelligentes pour améliorer le système canadien de soins de santé.



9:05 AM - 4 Feb 2019

**Churence Rogers, M.P.** @ChurenceRogers Follow

I had a great chat with some Medical students this morning on Seniors healthcare.



7:50 AM - 4 Feb 2019 from Ottawa, Ontario

5 Retweets 9 Likes

**Danielle Penney** @DaniellePenney Following

Great discussions with @PamDamoff about the issues facing seniors in Oakville North-Burlington & across Canada.



**Stephanie Smith** @stephanie\_smith Following

Feeling extremely fortunate to meet with and gain passionate support from the new Minister of Veteran Affairs, Jody Wilson-Raybould today on #SeniorsCare for CFMS Day of Action. So impressed with the student advocacy #CFMSDayofAction @CFMSFEMC @CMA\_Docs @UBCMDUP @uoftmedicine



11:04 AM - 4 Feb 2019

5 Retweets 31 Likes

**Stephanie Smith** @stephanie\_smith Following

Great discussion with MP @karenmccrimmon about #SeniorsCare at the #CFMSDayOfAction. Thank you for your positive support on the National Seniors Strategy and supporting change. @CFMSFEMC @ResidentDoctors @CMA\_Docs



1:36 PM - 4 Feb 2019

**Samir Sinha** @SamirSinha Following

TODAY AMAZING @CFMSFEMC Medical Students from across Canada are meeting with Federal MPs like our Seniors and Health Ministers @FilomenaTassiMP and @GinettePT to advance a thoughtful dialogue on how to advance #SeniorsCare and Ageing in support of a #NationalSeniorsStrategy!



4:07 AM - 4 Feb 2019

17 Retweets 34 Likes

**Linda Lam** @lindal Following

Thank you @MPMihychuk for meeting with us to talk #SeniorsCare and Aging with the #CFMSDayOfAction! You spoke of challenges with provinces, and that is why we are calling for federal leadership to implement a comprehensive #NationalSeniorsStrategy. @CFMSFEMC @mirandadmcd



8:21 AM - 4 Feb 2019

**McGill MSS** @MSSMcGill Follow

On Feb 4, four MSS representatives participated in the @CFMSFEMC's #CFMSDayofAction in Ottawa and met with Canadian MPs to discuss #SeniorsCare and aging. We look forward to seeing policies developed & actions taken to facilitate healthy aging & proper support for our seniors.



2:38 PM - 6 Feb 2019

**Adrina Zhong** @AdrinaZhong Following

Had a great meeting with @MPRubySahota about a National Seniors Strategy! Thanks for taking time to chat with @CFMSFEMC students about #seniorscare. We look fwd to hearing more about this topic in the upcoming election!  
#CFMSDayOfAction



9:32 AM - 4 Feb 2019 from Ottawa, Ontario

5 Retweets 15 Likes

**Sehjal B** @sehjal22 Following

Thank you so much for meeting with @jess\_froehlich and I today @cathayw! We truly appreciated the conversation and support for providing better care for our seniors 🇨🇦 #CFMSDayOfAction @CFMSFEMC



5:48 PM - 4 Feb 2019

1 Retweet 12 Likes

**Cdn Medical Students** @CFMSMAC Following

Some of our delegates met with MP @WayneStetski this morning on parliament hill! Thanks for hearing what #TomorrowsPhysicians have to say about #SeniorsCare and Ageing today!  
#CFMSDayOfAction



8:58 AM - 4 Feb 2019

**Danielle Penney** @DaniellePenney Following

Thank you @BryanMay for meeting with us to discuss how we can move beyond the medicalization of aging and adopt more of a holistic approach to #SeniorsCare in Canada  
#CFMSDayOfAction @CFMSFEMC



1:18 PM - 4 Feb 2019

1 Retweet 5 Likes

**Annie** @AnnieWU Following

Very grateful to have had the opportunity to meet with @JohnMcKayLib to discuss #SeniorsCare this morning!  
#CFMSDayOfAction @CFMSFEMC



9:31 AM - 4 Feb 2019

4 Retweets 22 Likes

**Rebecca Matthews** @rean708 Following

We did it!  
2 meetings with MPs and Ministers ✓  
Question Period ✓  
#CFMSDayOfAction has been incredible - better than I could have imagined. Feeling very aware of my privilege and grateful to have been involved in this movement.  
#HowWeAdvocate #TomorrowsPhysicians @CFMSFEMC



1:14 PM - 4 Feb 2019

1 Retweets 33 Likes

**Caroline Leps** @caroline\_leps Following

Wonderful meeting with @ziad\_abouttaif this morning - our focus was on strategies to deliver better healthcare to seniors in their home.  
#CFMSDayOfAction



8:06 AM - 4 Feb 2019

3 Retweets 11 Likes

**Sureka Pavalagantharajah** @SurekaPav Following

Had an amazing discussion with the Honourable @janephilpott today about seniors care and aging as a followup to CFMS Lobby Day! Happy to learn that her office has information about resources for seniors and their caregivers readily available  
#SeniorsCare #CFMSDayOfAction



10:47 AM - 22 Feb 2019

1 Retweet 12 Likes

## Priorities Moving Forward



The CFMS Day of Action in Ottawa built tremendous momentum within CFMS members on seniors care and aging. It is our goal moving forward, to build on the months of research and community consultations leading to the development of the Day of Action advocacy campaign, and to use the momentum from the event to propel us further to improve care for seniors and support healthy aging throughout the lifespan. Our actions moving forward include:

1. Collaborate with and support delegates to engage local medical learners on the topic of seniors care and aging
  - a. Delegates have committed to bringing in speakers, hosting letter writing campaigns, working with a long-term care facility in their community, to name a few.
  - b. Others have identified opportunities to advocate for greater geriatric training into their curriculum, developing service-learning opportunities for working with seniors, and advocating for their school to adopt a seniors-student co-housing program.
2. Implement a summer studentship opportunity in 2019 funded by the CFMS to support a medical student to work with a scholar and/or leader in seniors care and aging to further research and support work aligning with the topic of seniors care and aging.

# Acknowledgements

The CFMS would like to acknowledge the tremendous work of everyone involved in making the 2019 National Day of Action on Seniors Care and Aging a success!

First off, we would like to acknowledge the efforts of the 76 medical learner delegates who traveled to Ottawa from across the country to participate in the Day of Action and to advocate on seniors care and aging to federal policymakers. Thank you for passionately engaging in the process, by bringing your stories and diligently learning about how we can better care for seniors and support healthy aging. Thank you for your professional representation of the CFMS and medical learners to federal MPs and policymakers.



Next, we would like to acknowledge the work of the Day of Action Topic Selection Committee and 2019 Day of Action Research Committee for their dedication and hard work on doing the consultations, conducting research, and putting together an excellent policy document that was instrumental in preparing our delegates for their meetings with MPs and policymakers. We would especially like to thank Research Committee members **Chantal Phillips** and **Jessica Froehlich** for taking part in the backgrounder presentation and difficult questions presentation. Thank you to the medical learners across the country who participated in the consultation process, your dedication ensured that this process was a success. Special thank you to the community leaders and health experts whose expertise and guidance helped shape the direction of our backgrounder and policy recommendations. For a full list of these individuals please view our “Community Consultations Review and Summary” document.



We would like to thank **Captain Stephanie Smith**, CFMS President, **David Wiercigroch**, CFMS National Officer of Health Policy, **Asha Behdinan**, CFMS National Officer of Human Rights and Peace, **Michelle Quaye**, CFMS Director of Global Health, and **Debbie Brace**, CFMS Ontario Representative and Government Affairs dyad partner, for helping lead parts of the Day of Action weekend. Thank you to **Victoria Januszkiewicz**, CFMS VP Communications, and the CFMS Communications Team, for coordinating social media strategies for the Day of Action, and for designing the logo for the Day of Action. Thank you to **MD Financial Management** for sharing with us your beautiful space for our weekend training.

Additionally, the weekend was brought to life by our amazing guests and invited speakers. We would like to thank **Verna McGregor**, for opening our day in a good way with

a territorial acknowledgement. Thank you to **Dr. Gigi Osler**, Canadian Medical Association President, **Dr. Frank Molnar**, Canadian Geriatrics Society President, and **Dr. Samir K. Sinha**, Director of Geriatrics at Sinai Health System and the University Health Network, for inspiring our delegates. We would also like to thank **Kelsey Shein** and **Holly Duggan** from the Canadian Medical Association Political Advocacy Team, for your interactive session in preparing our delegates on how to communicate with MPs and engage in political advocacy.

Finally, the Day of Action would not be possible without the heavy lifting that happens behind-the-scenes, from handling the logistics of booking venues and lodging, to feeding delegates, scheduling all the meetings, and ensuring that all three days of the Day of Action weekend ran smoothly. We would like to extend our sincere gratitude to our Day of Action Coordinator **Devon Saulis** and CFMS Office Manager **Rosemary Conliffe**.



## Conclusion

Our medical learners are becoming increasingly aware of how the social determinants of health and politics affect the health of our patients. There is significant interest in medical learners to learn the skills of a health advocate so that they can play an active role in shaping public policy and to create a healthier society.

The CFMS National Day of Action, is an initiative that provides medical learners the opportunity to learn about an important topic in health, to develop their communication and advocacy skills, and to collaborate with other medical learners from across Canada that share a similar passion. The CFMS National Day of Action has evolved over the last couple of years to include the voice of community leader and health experts of our topic. This has been an important piece in the development of advocacy campaigns, to ensure proper representation at a systemic level. The CFMS National Day of Action serves as a platform for medical learners to amplify their voices, and the voices of community, in government, to advocate for positive health changes.

The topic of seniors care and aging, reminded our delegates of the positive opportunities that an aging population affords society. Delegates, MPs, and policymakers alike, shared personal stories of seniors in their life and reflected on why advocating for seniors care and aging was important to them.

It is our hope, that by contributing the voice of young people to the discussion of seniors care and aging in advance of the 2019 federal election, that we can encourage our political parties to adopt a national seniors strategy and develop a comprehensive plan on how we can support seniors and healthy aging throughout the lifespan, for equitable care, and a sustainable system.



Linda Lam, CFMS National Officer of Political Action



Yipeng Ge, CFMS Director of Government Affairs