

Membership Services — Take Another Look

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A key attribute of a successful and dynamic volunteer organization is the ability to recruit and retain members. To develop this capability, an organization must be responsive to the needs of members and must deliver services they value, both professionally and personally.

CSHP has a strong history of and reputation for delivering quality services to its members and has been successful in maintaining a strong membership base. The tangible benefits that are available to individual members are the most evident and include the following:

- publications such as *CJHP*, *CSHP News and Employment Opportunities Bulletin*, and Branch newsletters, all valuable sources of information to keep members up to date
- high-quality continuing education events that keep members informed of therapeutic trends and practice developments in their profession
- documents such as the *Official Publications* and the Direct Patient Care curriculum, which give members the tools to develop and advance their professional services
- the Awards Program and the Fellowship Program, which recognize member excellence in pharmacy practice
- networking opportunities for the exchange of ideas and experiences: the Pharmacy Specialty Networks, the Web site, and educational sessions.

The less tangible membership services are often not fully understood or appreciated by members. These include investigating and examining areas of interest on behalf of the membership, as well as representing and lobbying for hospital pharmacy in the context of national health care issues being considered by government, other national organizations of health care professionals, and numerous other agencies. During the past year, CSHP has had member and office liaison with over 40 external agencies and organizations, and many

of these contacts involved multiple projects. The following examples of current activities represent the scope of our involvement:

- a coalition charged with planning a national program for reporting medication incidents (with the Therapeutic Products Directorate, Health Canada)
- a full sector study of pharmacist workforce issues, preparatory to developing projection models for future needs and recommendations for long-term strategies (with Human Resources Development Canada)
- preparation of a document promoting the pharmacist's role in patient care for the Commission on the Future of Health Care in Canada (the Romanow Commission).

These efforts go a long way in promoting the profession and in representing the interests and role of hospital pharmacists to politicians and key health care stakeholders. In times of health care reform and human resource constraints, a strong voice for the profession is essential. Perhaps, at the end of the day, we should be asking these questions: Without CSHP, who would be the voice of hospital pharmacy on national and provincial issues? And without CSHP, who would set practice standards and establish and promote the role of hospital pharmacists?

Despite CSHP's strong history, the future brings numerous challenges. Maintaining a strong membership



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base will be critical to the Society's success. Across the country, pharmacists have been faced with increases in professional fees for both mandatory and voluntary organizations. This situation has led many to review their voluntary membership commitments. Historical membership benefits will not be sufficient to meet the needs of the newer generation of pharmacists. Creative incentives and new initiatives will be required to attract and keep members.

In view of these challenges and the desire to provide quality value-added services, a CSHP membership survey will be sent to members this fall. It is your opportunity to tell us what CSHP should do for you and for the profession so that it can continue to be the voice of hospital pharmacy. Your feedback is critical to the success and longevity of CSHP. Please take time to complete the survey. In doing so, you will be helping to shape the membership services and the Society of the future.