

Is Anyone Listening?

Neil Johnson

Have you ever wondered if you are being heard? Whether it is a sales clerk who does not have time for you, your children who seem to practise selective hearing, or an inattentive boss, sometimes you may feel that other people are not hearing what you're saying. As well, many people have lost trust in government and the bureaucracy of larger institutions, like hospitals. So why does CSHP continue to advocate for hospital pharmacists?

I believe that the answer is relatively simple — people do listen! CSHP's leadership has not gone unnoticed. Here are some examples.

Earlier this year, at the 34th annual Professional Practice Conference (PPC), the Honourable Gary Mar, Minister of Health for the Province of Alberta, was the keynote speaker at CSHP's Research and Education Foundation Fundraising Dinner. Several members of the CSHP Executive had the opportunity to discuss a wide range of health care issues with Mr Mar during the dinner. Later, in his address, he made specific mention of several important initiatives undertaken by our Society, as well as the efforts of key CSHP members. Mr Mar left the PPC with a better knowledge of what CSHP members can and do offer to Canadian health care.

Another example is the development of the new Canadian Patient Safety Institute, which has received a commitment from the federal government for \$50 million over 5 years. This institute arose from the recommendations of the National Steering Committee on Patient Safety. CSHP was one of the participating organizations that spearheaded the work of the steering committee, and several CSHP members played prominent roles on the steering committee and in its working groups — another area where CSHP members are making a difference.

CSHP is continuing its advocacy work in branches across Canada. Recently, all branches of the Society were provided with a template letter describing the role of hospital pharmacists in the health care system, to supplement their local advocacy activities within their provincial constituencies. Positioning a consistent and

positive message to legislators and bureaucrats across the country is key, and the template letter is one way to do this.

Along with many other pharmacy organizations, CSHP has confirmed its support of and participation in the Pharmacy Sector

Study, sponsored by Human Resources Development Canada. This study will examine practice model and human resources issues involving pharmacists and pharmacy technicians across a variety of practice settings.

Later this year, members will be faced with another important opportunity to advocate for our profession. In late 2003 or early 2004 the results of the Canadian Adverse Events Study, funded by the Canadian Institute for Health Information and the Canadian Institutes for Health Research, will be released. Until now, there have been no comprehensive studies of adverse events in Canadian hospitals. The study will provide information on the rate and types of adverse events occurring in acute care in Canada, drawing attention to the issue of safety in Canadian hospitals. When the study is made public, hospital leaders, the media, and patients will all be searching for information on how to enhance patient safety. CSHP and its members are well positioned to supply such information, through our standards, position papers, and expertise. Patients and administrators will be turning to you and your hospital pharmacy colleagues for advice, and CSHP will be there to provide individual members and branches with the background information they will need to answer questions and to advocate for the role of the hospital pharmacist.

So why do we speak up? Very simply, it is because people listen. Take the opportunity to help advocate



with CSHP. Contact your branch leadership to see how you might take an active volunteer role in the organization. When chatting with colleagues who are not CSHP members, let them know what CSHP can offer them. Together, we can continue to make a difference.

Neil Johnson, BScPhm, MBA, is President and External Liaison for CSHP.

