

Remember to Breathe

Donna Wheeler-Usher

In the middle of a typically busy day, have you ever caught yourself needing to take a deep breath? It seems that, more and more, we are committing ourselves (sometimes voluntarily, sometimes not) to new responsibilities involving work, family, professional organizations, our children's schools, and community groups. As a result, a "routine day" can precipitate a frenzy of meetings and appointments, and we find ourselves running from point A to point B and from point B to point C, attempting to accomplish something constructive. It is no wonder that we experience that feeling of breathlessness! Perhaps we might view the need to take a deep breath as a signal that it is time to evaluate our level of commitment.

Over the past 3 or 4 years, CSHP has been assuming new responsibilities — the Web site, various publication projects, and more educational programs — at a steady rate, without adding significantly to our human or financial resources. As a result, CSHP staff and volunteers have found themselves needing to take a breath. At our AGM 2000, CSHP Council decided that it was time to evaluate the Society's internal and external commitments and to realign them to realistically reflect both the services that our members want and our financial and human resources.

Although some may interpret this action negatively, it is proving to be an excellent opportunity to reassess what CSHP should be doing for its members. It is pushing us to determine how best to utilize our office staff and volunteers. It is forcing us to ask "What does CSHP need to do for members practising in organized health-care settings to improve their level of direct patient care?" It is also asking us to be creative in determining how to improve our long-term financial status.

In attempting to answer some of the above questions CSHP Council and staff have realized that once a new Executive Director is hired we must carefully review CSHP's key services. This will include

examining the operations of our Ottawa office, as well as surveying the general membership later this fall to determine what members feel the Society's primary responsibilities and services should encompass.

Using our new Vision 2003 statement as well as the results of the membership survey, CSHP Council and staff will be able to make confident decisions regarding the direction the Society should take in the next few years. One long-standing belief that CSHP Council members will continue to support during our review work is that CSHP is here to service all pharmacy practitioners in Canada whose professional focus is the care of patients in hospitals and related health-care facilities.

While CSHP takes a deep breath, it will be able to focus on streamlining its responsibilities and activities. The end result will be CSHP's development as a professional organization that will provide strong leadership and assistance to its members and the profession of pharmacy in Canada for another 50 years. Taking a deep breath helps crystallize what is most important to us as individuals and as an organization. When was the last time you took one?



Donna Wheeler-Usher, BScPharm, MSPharm, is CSHP Past-President.

