

ADVOCACY UPDATE



CAS In the News

In response to CBC's January podcast episode of White Coat Black Art and the accompanying CBC digital article exploring the introduction of CRNAs as a potential solution to anesthesia human health resources (HHR) challenges in Canada, many CAS members actively voiced their concerns regarding biased coverage and contacted CBC.

Members emphasized the effectiveness of the existing Canadian solution: Anesthesia Assistants (AAs) and the Anesthesia Care Team Model (ACT). CBC subsequently published a follow-up article highlighting the integral role of AAs and the ACT model in addressing surgical wait times and maintaining patient safety in Canada:

Read CBC's follow-up here:

CBC White Coat Black Art Article

Elevating Member Issues With Policy Makers

Federal Engagement:

In March, CAS President, Dr Giuseppe Fuda, and CAS CEO Vanessa Foran, met with representatives from Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC). This included Dany Drouin (Director General of the Plastics and Waste Management Directorate) and Tracey Spack (Director, Plastics Regulatory Affairs Division).

The meeting was highly productive, focusing on anesthesiologists' critical role in healthcare delivery and CAS' proactive stance on environmental sustainability.

The discussion also highlighted CAS's new environmental position statement and the strong support from members for greening the OR. CAS continues to call on governments to introduce federal regulations for phasing out desflurane, reducing nitrous oxide use, and encouraging the development of more environmentally sustainable products for operating rooms. ECCC acknowledged the alignment of CAS's recommendations with governmental environmental priorities and encouraged ongoing dialogue with Health Canada post-election.

Provincial Engagement

New Brunswick:

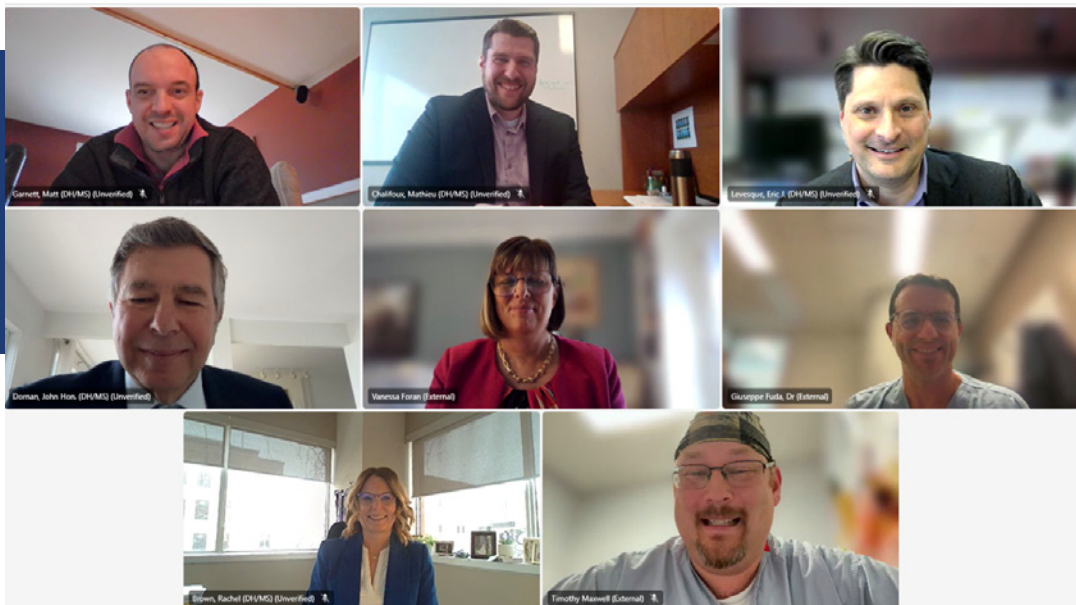
In April, Dr Fuda and Ms. Foran, along with Dr Timothy Maxwell, former Board member and current CAS' Public Affairs Committee member, met with New Brunswick's Minister of Health, Dr John Dornan and senior officials Eric Levesque (ADM, Francophone Affairs, Public Health and Medicare & Physician Services), Mathieu Chalifoux (ADM, Health System Collaboration), and Rachel Brown (Executive Director, Talent Recruitment).

Meeting highlights included:

- A discussion about expedited credentialing processes for internationally trained anesthesiology professionals, a measure already underway in collaboration with the College of Physicians and Surgeons.
- CAS emphasized the underutilization of Anesthesia Assistants in the province, highlighting their significant contributions and the efficiencies gained through their integration as they are trained and trusted by anesthesiologists
- CAS also advised that nurse anesthetists are not a model that New Brunswick anesthesiologists are familiar with and emphasized that they would unlikely represent a savings to the system, and that more support for Anesthesia Assistants and the Canadian ACT model is needed.
- The Minister positively received CAS's recommendations regarding environmental sustainability, specifically the reduction of desflurane and nitrous oxide, aligning well with current hospital infrastructure projects in Saint John.



**CANADIAN
ANESTHESIOLOGISTS'
SOCIETY**



Saskatchewan:

In late April, Saskatchewan's Health Minister, the Honourable Jeremy Cockrill, and Kim Statler, Executive Director of the Saskatchewan Medical Services Branch, met with Dr Fuda, Ms. Foran, and Saskatchewan CAS Board Member Dr Melanie Orvold.

Highlights of the meeting included:

- CAS' recommendations on improving working conditions, recruitment, and retention of anesthesiologists were discussed extensively, with Minister Cockrill expressing openness to continued collaboration.
- Minister Cockrill recognized the essential role anesthesiologists play within the healthcare system, underscoring Health Human Resources (HHR) as a central governmental priority.
- Although environmental health policies were not prioritized at this time, discussions were constructive, laying the foundation for future collaborations.

British Columbia:

In late May, Dr Fuda and Ms. Foran, met with British Columbia's Health Minister, the Honourable Josie Osborne and BCAS members and staff, including CAS Board member and BCAS President, Dr Annika Vrana.

Highlights of the meeting included:

- A discussion about reinstating a locum program, highlighting past work and the need for access to anesthesia care in rural BC.
- The importance of the Anesthesia Care Team model and the need for Anesthesia Assistant regulations.
- Identifying strategies to improve OR efficiency, highlighting some of the ongoing issues associated with PACU holds, and recommending a tracking system to help identify issues and find solutions.

Nova Scotia:

In early May, Dr Fuda, Ms. Foran, and Nova Scotia CAS Board Member, Dr Dennis Drapeau, met with Stacy Burgess and Angela Purcell, senior officials from Nova Scotia Health and Wellness.

Highlights of the meeting included:

- Congratulating the Ministry for streamlining the process for IMGs to practice in Nova Scotia, which has greatly contributed to reducing the anesthesiologists' shortage in the province, which now enjoys almost full coverage.
- Raising concerns to the Ministry about potential disruptions from upcoming system changes and requesting that anesthesiologists be included in discussions and plans to ensure a smooth transition. Also noted was the ongoing pressure to deliver more with the same level of resources.
- A fulsome discussion about CAS' Environmental Sustainability position statement took place during which Ministry representatives said that Desflurane is minimally used, and they will review the formulary.

What's Next

Throughout the summer and fall, CAS will continue its proactive government relations approach, focusing on both federal and provincial engagements to address and represent the critical needs and priorities of Canadian anesthesiologists.