

**The CAPA Brief-Case
December 2003**

Arthritis Centre Opens in Ottawa

CAPA President Ann Qualman was on the guest list at the opening of The Arthritis Centre in Ottawa on December 2nd. The Centre, the first facility in Ottawa devoted to arthritis, will have specialized clinics and provide patient care in a multi-disciplinary setting including physiotherapy, occupational therapy, and social work services. Ann was also invited to attend a meeting at the Centre on clinical priority setting, the first time a patient has been invited to participate in these discussions. The Arthritis Centre is housed in the Ottawa Hospital at the Riverside Campus. *Editor*

Disability Tax Credit Update

Significant improvements have been made to the Disability Tax Credit Certificate form T2201 (DTC) for the 2003 taxation year. The eight-page document was drafted by Canada Customs and Revenue Agency (CCRA) in consultation with several organizations and professional associations including members from the Health Charities Coalition for Tax Fairness of which CAPA and TAS are members. The form will be available early in 2004.

CAPA members who feel they may qualify under the provisions of the new/improved form, who HAVE NOT applied before can request the DTC for each year (back to 1986) since they became ***markedly restricted in performing an activity of daily living*** as specified in the T2201 form. A physician will be required to substantiate that applicants meet the eligibility criteria for the corresponding number of years. *Lembi Buchanan*

CAPA setting the standard for informed advocacy

The Federal Standing Committee on Health held cross-Canada hearings for its study on prescription drugs this fall. CAPA's Vice President, Anne Dooley, and Sherry McKinnon, Executive Director of The Arthritis Society, Saskatchewan Division appeared before the committee in Saskatoon on October 1, 2003. Sherry provided the introductions and, as Arthritis in Canada came out the previous day, statistics about the incidence of arthritis. Anne followed with an overview of her brief about governance of clinical trials as it relates to participating human subjects. During the question and answer period that followed, Anne was able to provide the committee with information they didn't have. Chair Bonnie Brown delivered the ultimate compliment when she said that CAPA was leading the way and setting the standard for informed patient advocacy. *Editor*

Health Canada and US Food and Drug Administration sign Memorandum of Understanding for closer collaboration

Diane Gorman, Assistant Deputy Minister, Health Products and Food Branch, Health Canada says, "It [Memorandum of Understanding] will greatly enhance our ability in Canada to more rapidly identify benefits and risks associated with therapeutic products. As well it enables us to have a more efficient therapeutic product evaluation process to allow Canadians to have faster access to important new therapies." Read the complete announcement at http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/english/media/releases/2003/2003_86.htm

Smart Consumer Partnerships CAPA opens doors for consumer influence

Affiliation with CAPA continues to provide new opportunities for people to speak out and influence the arthritis agenda. The Health Products and Food Branch (HPFB) invited Ann Qualman to be the consumer member on a panel with representatives of Rx&D, government and the medical profession at a workshop held in Ottawa on September 24, 2003. The audience consisted of 120 HPFB senior managers. HPFB is the largest branch of Health Canada and is responsible for, among other things, approving new medications, post-market surveillance of approved drugs and regulation of natural health products. Ann urged HPFB to add public education to its regulatory function and offered practical suggestions for involving consumers in the work of HPFB. "It was a golden opportunity to bring attention to arthritis and raise consumer issues with Health Canada," Ann said. To see her Power Point presentation on how to involve consumers, click on <http://www.arthritis.ca/local/files/capa/Anns%20HC%20Presentation%20Smart%20Consumer%20Partnerships%20revised%20Sept%202003.pdf>

Editor

Making the grade

Congratulations are in order. Of the six CAPA members trained for participation on bio-medical Research Ethics Boards, two have been appointed. Gordon Gray, Ph.D., Saskatoon, was named as a scientific representative to the University of Saskatchewan bio-med REB in September. A few days later Glen Urquhart was appointed to the University of Victoria bio-med REB in the role of community representative. Interest in consumer participation in REBs is growing, and that means we need to train more members. If you know of CAPA members who have participated as subjects in clinical trials and may be interested, please ask them to contact me at annemd@shaw.ca. Training is done on the honour system at your own pace. *Anne Dooley*