

Message from the President of CAPA

By: Ann Qualman

What is CAPA doing? As always, our members are actively working on various issues important to them and to people living with arthritis. You'll be delighted and possibly amazed at the range of topics covered in this issue of CAPA Voices.

Probably the most urgent matter is action around cross-border Internet pharmacies – so hot that it has an acronym: CBIP. Awareness must be raised about the consequences of CBIP for the health of all Canadians. The federal election is another hot topic that we hope will engage CAPA members across the country. Increasing the awareness of current Members of Parliament and incoming candidates to arthritis key issues will increase political will relating to health care policy. And don't forget to complete the Disability Tax Credit (DTC) "revised form" survey. The Coalition for Disability Tax Credit Reform is representing you and needs your input. While these matters are urgent, we're pleased to raise in this issue of Voices another topic, which we hope to embrace permanently – that of children and youth with arthritis.

We know that children and youth live with arthritis but for most of us, our knowledge of juvenile arthritis stops there. An exciting new development is that children, their parents and pediatric health care professionals are speaking out, demanding that we give juvenile arthritis the attention it deserves. Juvenile arthritis is moving out of the shadows of neglect and CAPA has offered to help out. As a first step, members of the CAPA Steering Committee have made contacts with Pediatric Rheumatologists and people living with juvenile arthritis. We have accepted their request to help bring together people interested and experienced in one or more of the many kinds of arthritis that attack children and youth.

CAPA hopes to connect with people who live with juvenile arthritis and their families and to support them in the development of advocacy plans and activities. To launch this initiative, I encourage our members and supporters who live with any form of juvenile arthritis and their families to contact me by email: aqualman@cyberus.ca. We look forward to hearing from this very important part of our arthritis community.

Juvenile arthritis is featured in the report on the Frontiers in Inflammatory Joint Disease conference, which brought together researchers, clinicians, people living with arthritis and other stakeholders. Juvenile arthritis needs to be a regular feature of VOICES. We encourage those of you who have experienced this disease to write to us and share your stories.

Other very recent developments within CAPA are two new publications. One is our Annual Report for 2003 which highlights our successes last year, our objectives and priorities for 2004, and information about our Steering Committee and CAPA membership. The other publication is a CAPA information brochure. It tells who and what we are and includes a summary of the Canadian Arthritis Bill of Rights.

We have an exciting issue of VOICES. Drop a line to our editor and let us know how you like it!