



BC PEDIATRIC SOCIETY NEWSLETTER THE PRESCRIPTION PAD



An Interview with Dr. Aven Poynter, President of the BC Pediatric Society

— Staff

Dr. Aven Poynter is the new President of the BC Pediatric Society (BCPS), although she's not new to the BCPS.

This article is the first in a series of interviews with BCPS Board members and we hope provides an opportunity for our members to become better acquainted with the Board and become more involved with the BCPS.

What are your goals as President?

1. **Member engagement!** We would like every pediatrician in B.C. to be a member of the BCPS. In order for that to happen, we need to convince every pediatrician that he/she is getting value for their membership fee. One way we offer value is through our advocacy work, both economically for pediatricians, and through our advocacy work for children and families. We also provide cme accredited learning opportunities that members can attend at a lower rate than non members. And a special note to afp pediatricians; if we have more input from sub specialists and afp physicians at BCCH, we can work with you to make sure your payments are in line with ffs fee items.
2. Having a pediatrician attached to every elementary school in B.C. Our Past President, Dr. Mary Ann Beimers, has been working on this project in Vancouver, and we'd like to expand it all over the Province. In order to do that we need to provide a template that can be used province wide, in larger and smaller communities. This is important because many children in schools, especially those with mental health issues, or difficult social circumstances, need pediatric care in a timely fashion.
3. Reducing the ffs and alternate payment disparity between pediatricians and other specialists is an ongoing goal of the BCPS. I look forward to learning from the BCPS Economics Committee (Drs . Bill Abelson and Todd Sorokan) who are experts in this field.



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Why do you think it's important to be a member of the BCPS? Why did you join?

When I joined the BCPS I thought it would be useful for educational purposes and networking. I wanted to get to know my colleagues, who was in each community, and what resources were available. And over the years, I've really enjoyed the BCPS conferences. I didn't realize at the time I joined that the BCPS advocates economically for pediatricians. I want to give credit to the both Dr. Judy Hall and Dr. Patrick Melton for having the foresight to establish the BCPS.

How do you see the future of pediatrics?

What I think should happen is that pediatrics will become more multidisciplinary and change from a specialty in which pediatricians work in their offices in solo practices. Medical care of children now involves the whole family, plus physicians, plus schools – and community services. This is the same approach we use in the Child and Youth Mental Health Clinic where I work part time. That's why I'm so enthused about the project to attach pediatricians to schools. The pediatrician is out of his/her office, seeing the child in the education setting, where the child is at.

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THE PRESCRIPTION PAD BCPS BOARD MEMBERS

What was your career path? Did you always know you wanted to be a pediatrician?

I was always science oriented, so after high school, I did an honours math degree starting at Okanagan College (when that was portable classrooms in Kelowna) and then UBC. Partway through, I took a year off to travel. But in the first year of college I decided I wanted to be a pediatrician, I loved working with children, and all my part time jobs up until then had been working with children. So I applied to medical school during my final year at UBC and got in to Dalhousie in Halifax. I loved it, right from the start - in the first week we had an introductory lecture from Dr. Richard Goldbloom and Dr. Nuala Kenny. I introduced myself to them, said I wanted to be a pediatrician, and asked if I could do my first year elective with them – and they agreed. When I graduated from medical school, I did a straight internship in pediatrics at the Isaac Walton Killam Hospital in Halifax. After my three core years, I wanted to move, so I did a fellowship in pediatric respirology in Winnipeg at the Children's Hospital. After Winnipeg, I knew I wanted to work in the community, and we wanted to come back to BC. At that time you had to buy a practice in BC, and there was a practice for sale in Langley, so we moved here. There were 2 pediatricians in Langley, so I did 1 in 2 call and office practice - and had two year old and new baby. I don't advise this!

How did you balance your work and family life during those years?

I got married part way through medical school, and had my first child during the fellowship years. It's all a blur! In Winnipeg I had a really supportive Residency Director and Program Director, and they let me spread out my fellowship between children and take long maternity leaves. My husband was employed during that time so we didn't have income worries. I remember I spent my maternity leave studying for the Royal College exams (so a baby nap gave me time to study). When I started as a community pediatrician, I had the support of a good husband, good babysitters and a good MOA. As I didn't know any better, that's the way it was. So I worked and still did all the wife and mother things.

What advice would you offer to residents/young pediatricians?

I have all sorts of advice: don't do too much call, work in a congenial supportive group, don't be afraid to ask for support or help and look after yourself, and don't let the demands wear you out. Above all, have fun with your patients!

top reasons to renew

- With your support, we can continue our work on decreasing the pay disparity between pediatricians and many other specialists
- With your support, we can offer CME accredited events at a reduced fee (or no fee) to members
- With your support, our advocacy efforts can really make a difference for your patients and their families.

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The BC Pediatric Society (BCPS) is the professional association of the pediatrician and pediatric subspecialists in BC. The BCPS vision is that all BC infants, children, adolescents and their families will attain optimal physical, mental and social health.

**It's time to renew your
BC Pediatric Society membership!**