

Your Candidate for
**CANADIAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION
PRESIDENT-ELECT**



Dr. Granger Avery

31 January 2015

Dear Colleagues,

I have been asked to specifically address some anxieties that have been expressed around “opening up CaRMS such that Canadian Medical Graduates directly compete with Canadians who are studying abroad for 1st round CaRMS positions”.

I have not heard of any such discussion and I would not support any move in this direction.

I reiterate what I have said in my first letter to you:

“It is absolutely essential that the best possible training and supports to our medical students and residents are provided, something I have been committed to my whole career, including being a founder of PARI, the precursor to PAR-BC. Canadian medical graduates are a vital part of our healthcare system and you will be at the forefront in a very short time. This is why your involvement in this election is so important.”

This necessarily extends to residency training. It is encouraging that the last two CaRMS matches have successively broken CMG records for numbers of places (2990 across Canada in 2014) and first choice placements (91.4% in 2014).

Canada is still not producing sufficient numbers of physicians for our population (OECD reports Canada has 2.5 physicians per 1000 population, compared to 3.2 OECD nations’ average) and, currently, one quarter of Canadian physicians graduated from a foreign medical school. And, as you may know, rural Canadians will continue to take the brunt of doctor shortages.

The reasons for this mismatch are multiple, but the Barer-Stoddart report of 1991 must take major blame. Despite very strong opposition by CMA, BCMA (including myself!) and others, governments jumped on the recommended reduction of medical school places as a way to “save money”. This has got us to where we are today, notwithstanding recent increases.

So, it looks as though Canada will continue to be dependent upon physician resource ‘top-up’ with IMGs for while. The only way to manage this until Canada qualifies sufficient physicians for all our needs, will be to continue to offer direct registration to fully qualified physicians from the ‘Favoured Four’ nations, the current parallel IMG residency programs and the Practice Readiness Assessment processes.

Sincerely,

Granger Avery