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Message from the Editor-in-Chief

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Marshall Chasin, AuD

Being Part of Something Larger

On a personal note, when I entered the field of Audiology in the early 1980s, I was fortunate enough to have my first job at an agency where Audiology was only one component. There was a hearing aid dispensary, a vocational rehabilitation division for Deaf and hard of hearing people, a technical devices store, ASL interpreter services, and other counselling and psychology services. We frequently were asked to consult with various governmental departments and on policy issues such as the reallocation of hearing health resources. I was part of something larger- my job and "occupational perspective" was quite broad and I was delighted to be a cog- albeit an important cog- in a larger organization and a larger vision- the perfect first job.

But this type of work environment is rarely seen. In our practices we try to be as thorough and as broadly based as we can. It is not unusual to become involved, either as part of our vocation or as an avocation in other elements of our field such as public education, and even in some cases, going on missions to other countries where hearing health care is not as established as it is in Canada. As audiologists we strive to always be a part of something larger. This is perhaps one of the greatest disappointments I have had in being a sole private-practice audiologist for the last 40+ years. I missed being part of something larger.

But the Canadian Academy of Audiology (CAA) is an organization that can allow us to be part of something larger. The CAA has elements of consumer education, policy development and advocacy at both the provincial and federal levels, educational programming and a publication called CanadianAudiologist.ca that touches on all aspects of audiology, especially in areas where we don't normally tread. There are opportunities to serve on committees and the board of directors. The CAA has position papers on a range of topics with more being developed. One such position paper is on Over-The-Counter (OTC) hearing aids. The CAA advocates for any device or approach that increases access to all Canadians who require hearing healthcare assistance, while calling for improved labelling of all products that can generate potentially damaging sound levels such as OTCs as well as consumer headphones. Specifically in our OTC position paper we not only call for labelling of OTCs but all consumer products that have the potential to generate high sound levels such as consumer headphones.

Serving in some formal capacity in the CAA can be quite rewarding and is always a two-way street. A CAA member gets as much out of serving as the CAA receives from their work.

And we can't forget the social element. As the largest group of audiologists in Canada, our conferences are not just for educational purposes and sharing our latest academic and clinical

work, but we get to see faces we may not have seen in years.

The Canadian Academy of Audiology allows us to be part of something larger.