

## Message from the President

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Dear CAA Members,

As the incoming president of CAA, I would like to acknowledge and thank Jean Holden, our executive director and Tracy Cook, our administrative manager, as well as all the volunteers who serve on the Board of Directors and on the many Committees, Task Forces, Coalitions and Interest Groups. They dedicate their time and knowledge throughout the year to make CAA an organization to be proud of. This is what makes this organization so special – that we, as dedicated audiologists, come together to pool our various skills, talents and knowledge to help elevate audiology in Canada and give audiologists a voice within our professional community, with other health care providers, with the public, with government bodies and beyond.

As audiology is a relatively young profession, we need to continue to raise awareness and advocate for our profession to debunk the stigma of hearing loss and emphasize the importance of hearing and balance health care. The literature tells us that it takes adults an average of 7 years from the time they notice a hearing loss until they finally go see an audiologist. In addition, 80% of people with a hearing loss who could benefit from hearing aids do not get them. Research has clearly shown that hearing loss is associated with serious health consequences including balance disfunctions, falls risks, cognitive problems, reduced social interactions, functional difficulty at school and work, depression, anxiety and isolation – all with a high cost to society. It is within our scope of practice, together with our patients' circle of care, to work towards the maintenance of hearing and balance health through the prevention, diagnosis and rehabilitation of these difficulties. Through awareness, education and advocacy, we have a voice within CAA. We should use this voice to empower our patients to take control of their hearing and balance health and thrive in their busy and challenging lives. Discussions should focus on care instead of loss so that our work can make a positive impact on our patients' lives and help them connect with their world.

Many of our CAA members share this vision for elevating audiology and work tirelessly to achieve this goal for our profession. This is made evident in the many activities that CAA Committees have undertaken this past year. Some of these include awareness campaigns by the PR & Awareness Committee each month of May and October; the Member's Only Blog hosted by the Science & Education Committee that incites high-level topics and discussions; advocacy for our professional needs on behalf of our members with federal health partners by the Third Party Committee, and the invited speakers, podium and poster presentations that continue to educate us with emerging research at the amazing conference that the Conference Committee supports every year. In addition, specific Task Forces, Coalitions and Interest Groups continue to highlight hearing health in infants and adults and lead education and awareness initiatives for tinnitus and vestibular care.

Between the high-impact talks, the thought-provoking poster presentations, the manufacturer and supplier exhibits, the food, the drinks, the dancing and the fund-raising at the 1920's gala, we

mingled with our peers and we caught up with our friends at the annual conference last month, as we celebrated CAA's 20th anniversary with style and poise. We have much to celebrate and be proud of. We also still have a lot challenges to conquer to reach our desired goals as a profession. Indeed, our profession still faces issues, many of which CAA will diligently continue to address in this coming year. One of our past presidents, Gurjit Singh, mentioned in his first "Message from the President," that as audiologists, "while our impact with patients is large, we are small". While this is true, I believe that by working together, focusing on the big picture, remembering our very broad scope of practice and embracing our challenges, we can foster tremendous change as we advocate for our profession.

Our collective dedicated, innovative and engaged voices at CAA will effectively combat issues we face in our field and will raise audiology to new heights over the next 20 years in Canada. I am proud to belong to our community of audiologists and I am honoured to have the opportunity to serve you as president of the academy for this coming year.

**Salima Jiwani, PhD, Reg.CASLPO**