

CJMMLS

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Advocacy and You

By Alana Fontaine, Director of Public Affairs,
Impact Public Affairs

It comes as no surprise that the Canadian Society for Medical Laboratory Science (CSMLS) is heavily committed to achieving critical goals. These goals include, but are not limited to, building awareness, raising the profile of the medical laboratory profession, and increasing the credibility of CSMLS members as core participants in health care and health care policy development.

We are now more focused on advocacy than ever before. As we enter 2011, CSMLS will be enhancing its proactive advocacy strategy to help achieve set goals and targets. Our strategy will include key elements, such as:

- Identifying key concerns/issues of importance;
- Setting realistic goals and objectives, outlining desired outcomes and acceptable alternatives;
- Conducting key research and obtaining facts;
- Determining our target audiences, including elected officials, both federal and provincial, public servants, the media, the general public, and membership;
- Developing a formal position, including key messages;
- Developing a tactical action plan, highlighting key activities and timelines;
- Establishing communications and continuing to develop relationships with our target audiences;
- Consulting our membership to seek critical input;
- Keeping our membership informed of progress along the way; and
- Seeking important feedback from our members and other key stakeholders.

While we, as a society, will be communicating member concerns to government and coordinating a targeted advocacy approach, politicians still respond best to strong, local pressure. That being said, in addition to



Alana Fontaine, Director of Public Affairs at Impact Public Affairs, was selected by PR News as one of 2010's top 15-to-Watch which honours the top 15 budding public relations practitioners world-wide.

CSMLS' overall advocacy strategy, CSMLS will continue to push for a strong, grassroots advocacy program. This is where you, as a CSMLS member, can take a lead role. As a member, you can play an important part in helping to advance CSMLS' goals by interacting and communicating with elected officials directly, one-on-one.

The ultimate goal is to ensure that your voices are heard and understood by elected officials and Canada's decision makers from coast to coast. We need your help to get our message across – and you won't be doing it alone. You will be joined over the coming months by other concerned medical laboratory professionals. Indeed, a strong, collective voice has a far greater chance of achieving tangible advocacy results than one voice alone.

There are several effective ways that you can reach out to your elected official. These include writing a personal letter, placing a phone call, sending an e-mail, setting up a face-to-face meeting or sending over a copy of the CSMLS journal. Remember, you are the expert. Your role as a medical laboratory professional in local life gives you all the expertise and background needed. You will be hearing more from us in the months to come about how you can get involved.

We understand that medical laboratory professionals are a critical link in ensuring that Canada's valued health care system works and works well. It is now up to us to ensure that our federal and provincial decision makers understand just the same. It's time to take our place as partners in health care!