

Stargardt's Disease, also motivated O'Connor.

So how can you get involved in such a rewarding field? According to McCormack, "It's a matter of making yourself available, maintaining your expertise, and getting along with people." O'Connor recommended that interested medical students and residents train in orthopedics, psychiatry, emergency, or family medicine, followed by certification in sports medicine. Taunton promoted the Sport Medicine Fellowship program offered through the University of British Columbia's Allan McGavin Sport Medicine Clinic. All three physicians suggested working

with local athletic teams and events before moving up to working with national teams and at international events. In particular, those interested in working with athletes with disabilities should contact such organizations as the BC Disabled Sport Association and the Canadian Paralympic Committee.

With H1N1 fears and medal-winning pressures mixed with sleep deprivation and time away from family, Canadian physicians were certainly challenged this past February and March. Nevertheless, as Taunton aptly noted, "It doesn't get any bigger than having the Games in your own backyard." 

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## Learning from our Future Patients

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As part of Celebrate Learning Week at UBC, the College of Health Disciplines and the UBC Teaching and Learning Enhancement Fund Grant held the First Annual Health Education Fair in the Life Sciences Centre on October 29th, 2009. The fair focused on interdisciplinary health education, hoping to educate students from all health disciplines including nursing, pharmacy, physiotherapy, occupational therapy and medicine.

With the slogan "Health Care Involves Everybody: a fair to bridge patient, community and campus expertise," 22 organizations set up display booths and hoped for students to inquire more about their cause. The Arthritis Society, Cerebral Palsy Association of BC, Canadian Diabetes Association and Canadian Mental Health Association were only a select few of the many organizations eager to teach students about their condition.

The purpose of the fair is to provide "...an opportunity for a wide range of organizations to come to the university to share their expertise," states Dr. Angela Towle, one of the fair organizers. She explains that "often the university thinks of community engagement in terms of outreach to the community; providing the expertise from the university to the community."

The BC Epilepsy Society was another organization that took part in the Health Education Fair. Kathryn Sykes, the community development coordinator for the society, explained that they hope to teach students about the society so that in the future students

can refer patients to them for support and resources. They also wish to educate the public about epilepsy so that more people know how to help someone experiencing a seizure. Many of the organizations that participated in the fair have many patient-oriented resources that they are willing to deliver to offices and clinics. They hope that this information will help educate patients about their diagnoses and facilitate the role of health care professionals by having this information available for their patients.

Patient panels were also arranged so that students could have the opportunity to hear patient's stories, focusing on the specifics of their conditions and on their health care concerns. The first patient panel consisted of a patient with a mental illness, a patient diagnosed with lymphoma and a patient diagnosed with scleroderma. Even though the audience was small, each patient was enthusiastic to educate the students about each condition. One of the patients, Ruth, was diagnosed with lymphoma and has fought a long battle with cancer ever since. Her message for students was to focus on the whole patient and to "[look] at the patient as a person and in the context of their own life." This message resonated throughout the fair. Patients wanted health care professionals to take a holistic approach when treating them.

With the interdisciplinary focus, keen patients and devoted organizations, this fair was a success. Perhaps with more advertising, even more students will attend these sessions and have the opportunity to hear patient's stories next year. We can learn so much from patients and what better time to do so than while we are students. 

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