Recommendations to the COMP Board of Directors from the CWC-IDEA Sub-Committee based on the 2021 EDI Climate Survey Results

The CWC-IDEA Sub-Committee acknowledges the Indigenous Nations on whose traditional lands its members live and work. CWC-IDEA recognizes the importance of these Indigenous Nations as vital contributors within our society and is committed to pursuing equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility for all Indigenous Peoples within our healthcare and academic institutions.

Foreword

This set of eight recommendations was developed by the COMP Women's Committee – Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility (CWC-IDEA) Sub-Committee for the COMP Board of Directors, based upon the results of the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Climate Survey that CWC-IDEA conducted in 2021 and reported on in 2022 [1].

We believe these recommendations are achievable and will lead towards positive change in the areas of concern identified by the climate survey. We encourage the COMP Board to lead and inspire the adoption of these recommendations into COMP's Strategic Plan and among the membership of COMP. A list of actions accompanies each recommendation. Some actions may be of higher priority than others, and some actions may be more readily achievable. These factors should be taken into consideration as the COMP Board undergoes the task of adopting these recommendations.

Prepared for the COMP Board of Directors by, David DeVries, Jaryd Christie, Tricia Chinnery, Siobhan Ozard, Yiwen Xu and Ghada Aldosary

Reviewed and approved by the members of CWC-IDEA in March 2023 (COMP Board requested edits: Nov 2023)

Endorsed by the COMP Board of Directors in November 2023

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RECOMMENDATION #1

Incorporate inclusion, diversity, equity and accessibility (IDEA) in COMP best practices.

Action 1a. Ensure COMP's commitment to IDEA is reflected in COMP's Strategic Plan.

Action 1b. Introduce agreed-upon inclusive language to be used in IDEA discussions and among the COMP community, by adopting and maintaining a "glossary of IDEA definitions".

Action 1c. Include IDEA-related, Board-approved projects in COMP's yearly budget to cover projected expenses (e.g. data collection, honoraria, training or consultation).

Action 1d. Collect anonymous feedback from members on IDEA experiences and obtain data to understand demographics of the entire COMP community on a meaningful recurrent basis.

Action 1e. Maintain equitable and diverse representation of the COMP membership within the COMP Board, committees, and all other volunteer roles, and provide mentorship for medical physicists from equity denied groups (EDGs) who desire to advance their opportunities for leadership within COMP.

Action 1f. Maintain the sustainability of COMP IDEA initiatives by encouraging equitable distribution of volunteer workloads, involvement of other committees (e.g. Science Committee, Education Committee and Student Council) in IDEA initiatives, and by providing COMP benefits to combat the minority tax burdening EDGs involved in IDEA work [3] (e.g. credits towards membership renewal or meeting attendance).

Action 1g. Provide continuous education to COMP members on the importance of IDEA within medical physics in our collective pursuit for excellence in the safe and effective delivery of patient care.

RECOMMENDATION #2

Define the Canadian medical physicist's role in truth and reconciliation with Indigenous communities and commit to action

The following calls to action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC) 94 Calls to Action [4] have been identified to be highly relevant to medical physics and are addressed by the following actions:

TRC 24. *Require all medical and nursing students to take a course dealing with Aboriginal health issues.*

Action 2a. Commit to learning about and empowering medical physicists' roles in addressing healthcare inequities for Indigenous populations.

TRC 11. *Provide adequate funding for First Nations students seeking post-secondary education.*
TRC 23. *Increase the numbers of Aboriginal professionals working in the healthcare field.*

Action 2b. Create a tuition scholarship for Indigenous graduate students funded by contributions from COMP members. Suggested name: "Yani Picard Memorial Graduate Student Scholarship" and suggested alternate name, if necessary: "COMP Graduate Student Scholarship". Yani Picard was a Senior Project Officer with the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission and this scholarship would potentially strengthen ties between COMP and the CNSC. Yani Picard's biography is in Appendix A.

RECOMMENDATION #3

Address harassment, discrimination and microaggressions in COMP

Action 3a. Conduct a review of harassment incidents that have affected COMP members with a focus on developing further, more targeted recommendations related to the harassment experienced by COMP members.

Action 3b. Upon the completion of the review in Action 3a, commit to ensuring all COMP members have appropriate harassment, discrimination, and microaggression training as a condition of COMP membership renewal, including knowledge of harassment and discrimination reporting mechanisms within their workplace, schools, and grant institutions.

Action 3c. Require members to review the COMP code of ethics and harassment policy upon membership renewal.

Action 3d. Appoint an ombudsperson and implement clear procedures for reporting and acting upon misconduct for harassment and discrimination occurring at or within COMP events and committees.

Action 3e. To address limited training regarding discrimination in Canadian workplaces by age and highest level of education attained, a focus group should be held at the COMP Annual Scientific Meeting. The focus group should be open to those who have experienced discrimination as well as those who want to learn more about the issues and solutions. The format would consist of brainstorming sessions for anonymized experiences of discrimination, with outcomes to be made available to all COMP members.

RECOMMENDATION #4

Foster inclusion, diversity, equity and accessibility in medical physics recruitment

Action 4a. Provide checklists and examples to aid in the creation of accessibility and disability accommodation statements for medical physics job postings and descriptions.

Action 4b. Promote the use of diverse recruitment and interview pools for volunteer, student, and employee positions in medical physics.

Action 4c. Provide educational materials or workshops to COMP members on the concepts and legislation surrounding IDEA in student, volunteer, and workplace recruitment.

Action 4d. Address the impact of Canada's healthcare crisis on COMP members, their wellness, their retention, and ease the burden on Canadian medical physicists by advocating for the recruitment of international medical physicists with COMP's provincial, national and international partners.

RECOMMENDATION #5

Cultivate accessibility, wellness, and mental health within medical physics

Action 5a. Ensure that meeting and conference venues are accessible to all persons.

Action 5b. Ensure that conference material (e.g. presentations, posters, signage) and educational content adhere to accessibility guidelines (example of guidelines to provide to presenters shown here [6]).

Action 5c. Provide access to an inclusive reflection/meditation/multi-faith prayer room during the COMP Annual Scientific Meetings, Winter Schools, and other COMP events.

Action 5d. Reduce the stigma surrounding mental health in medical physics by providing continuing education and speaker series on the topic. The COMP members should also be encouraged to utilize mental health resources available to them through their workplace, health benefits, and communities.

RECOMMENDATION #6

Encourage and support retainment of equity denied groups (EDGs) in medical physics

Action 6a. Support outreach by COMP members to pre-graduate students and the public to increase awareness of the medical physics field.

Action 6b. Establish different types of mentorship opportunities through COMP, including one-on-one mentoring programs, peer mentoring, and group mentoring. Specifically, students and recent graduates should mentor new students applying or entering CAMPEP graduate studies programs to promote the retention of EDGs throughout the medical physics development pipeline.

Action 6c. Create a tuition scholarship for EDG graduate students funded by contributions from COMP members. Suggested names include the "Anna Celler Graduate Student Tuition Scholarship" or the alternate name, "COMP Graduate Student Tuition Scholarship", if necessary. Dr. Anna Celler's biography is in Appendix B.

RECOMMENDATION #7

Promote health equity within medical physics

Action 7a. Establish an ongoing partnership with a diverse group of patient representatives to gain perspectives on patient experiences.

Action 7b. Provide educational resources or workshops on the importance of health equity across the Canadian healthcare landscape.

Action 7c. Highlight initiatives and collaboration opportunities that address inequities faced by diverse populations in medical physics practice.

RECOMMENDATION #8:

Address challenges related to gender and sexual orientation disparity in COMP participation

Action 8a. Facilitate mentorship of women medical physicists who would like to advance their opportunities for leadership in COMP, grant funding application and research, education, and technological innovation.

Action 8b. Provide appropriate childcare options for parents attending in-person COMP events (*i.e.*, Winter Schools and Annual Scientific Meetings) as well as Board meetings.

Action 8c. Allocate a clean and private lactation room for nursing parents during in-person COMP events as well as Board meetings.

Action 8d. Hold focus groups at upcoming COMP Annual Scientific Meetings to learn about barriers faced by the COMP medical physics community, particularly harassment and discrimination related to gender, sexual orientation, pregnancy, and caregiving responsibilities. The goal of these focus groups is to probe the challenges faced by these equity denied groups, and to identify strategies to improve IDEA.

Action 8e. Work with COMP members to raise awareness of the sexual and gender minority disparities present within medical physics and the broader scientific community, along with promoting approaches to foster inclusive and welcoming environments for everyone.

Appendix A: Biography for Yani Picard (1968 - 2022)

From: InterACTIONS April 2022

By: Kavita Murthy & Mark Broeders

The authors would like to dedicate the CNSC's contribution to this edition of InterACTIONS to remembering our colleague and friend Yani Picard.

Yani Picard passed away unexpectedly on January 3rd after a brief illness. This was devastating for his colleagues, friends, and for his wife and four children.

Yani was a Senior Project Officer in the Accelerators and Class II facilities division (ACDF) at the CNSC and loved his job, especially because it was related to the field of Medical Physics. Yani graduated from the McGill University Medical Physics program in 1994, completing his MSc research under the supervision of Dr. Chris Thompson at the Montreal Neurological Institute. He joined the CNSC in 2008 after working for several years at the Consumer and Clinical Radiation Protection Bureau of Health Canada as a medical physicist. Yani continued to be active with COMP throughout his career and was often asked to share his thoughts as both a member of the medical physics community and COMP.

Working in ACFD, with its mandate spanning medical and non-medical accelerator facilities in Canada, allowed Yani to leverage his medical physics training in his role as a regulator. His understanding of the operating environment in a radiation oncology clinic came from training as a graduate student. Many licensees have expressed appreciation for his pragmatic approach to regulatory issues. As a colleague, he was a calm, collaborative and positive presence: he was always up for a challenge, always helpful and always had a smile on his face. He was simply someone you liked to be around.

Yani belonged to the Huron Wendat First Nation and was incredibly proud of his Indigenous heritage. Most recently, in addition to his "day job", Yani took on a leadership role as co-chair of the CNSC's Indigenous Network and in this role increased awareness of Indigenous culture and knowledge within the CNSC.

The loss of Yani so unexpectedly was a shock that reverberated throughout the CNSC and beyond. We also heard from many of you who knew him as a treasured friend, valued colleague and trusted regulator. Yani is irreplaceable and will be greatly missed.

Appendix B: Biography for Dr. Anna Celler (1951 - 2020)

From: UBC Department of Physics & Astronomy
(phas.ubc.ca/memoriam-anna-celler-1951-2020)

Dr. Anna Celler, a fantastic colleague, mentor, educator and pioneer in medical imaging, passed away on December 24, 2020, after a two-and-a-half year battle with uterine cancer.

Born and raised in Poland, Dr. Celler received her M.Sc. in 1974 and her Ph.D. in 1980 from the university of Warsaw where she became an expert in nuclear physics. After spending some time in research laboratories in Poland, France, and Finland, she moved to Canada with her husband and joined the Charge Exchange Group at TRIUMF in 1984. In 1991, Anna joined the nuclear medicine department at the Vancouver General Hospital as a clinical medical imaging physicist. Soon, she was overseeing the quality assurance program of 12 nuclear medicine departments around the Lower Mainland. In 1995, Anna was certified as a member of the Canadian College of Physicists in Medicine (CCPM) in recognition of her competence in physics as applied to medicine. She became a fellow of the CCPM one year later.

Dr. Celler's passion for research led her to create the Medical Imaging Research Group (MIRG) in 1991 at the Vancouver General Hospital (VGH) / University of British Columbia (UBC). Her research interests were related to image quantification with diagnostic nuclear medicine imaging modalities, particularly with single photon emission computed tomography (SPECT). Anna is considered a pioneer in quantitative and dynamic SPECT, as well as a leading expert in dosimetry for radiopharmaceutical therapies using SPECT. As an example, Siemens implemented a "profile attenuation correction system" in their medical equipment which was a method fully developed by Anna. In 2012, Anna received the Sylvia Fedoruk prize for her work in dual isotope imaging with positron emission tomography (PET). Dr. Celler was also part of a multi-institutional and multi-disciplinary team led by researchers at TRIUMF (Canada's national particle accelerator centre) that developed methods of producing the isotope Tc-99m with a cyclotron. This method received Health Canada's approval in early December 2020 and will make it possible to avoid shortages of this radioisotope which is used in more than 80% of all nuclear medicine diagnostic procedures. This work was awarded the Brockhouse Canada Prize for Interdisciplinary Research in Science and Engineering in 2015. Anna's work has also found multiple applications in the development of personalized patient dosimetry for radiopharmaceutical therapies.

Over the last 3 decades, Dr. Celler supervised numerous trainees in medical physics (including >50 from our own department). She supervised post-doctoral fellows, graduate students, undergraduate students, and nuclear medicine residents. Many of her trainees have now leading positions in academia, industry, and healthcare.

Because of all her contributions to clinical duties, teaching, and research, Dr. Celler was awarded the Gold Medal of the Canadian Organization of Medical Physicists (COMP) in 2018, the highest distinction given by this organization.

What stood out profoundly with Anna, was that she valued human beings. She cared deeply about her trainees and the people around her, and created and led a lively work and research environment. She will be tremendously missed.

References

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[2] Collins, Brian W. "Tackling unconscious bias in hiring practices: The plight of the Rooney rule." NYUL Rev. 82 (2007): 870.

[3] Hendrickson, Kristi RG, Avery, SM, Castillo, R.,, Cervino, C., Cetnar, A., Gagne, NL., Harris, W. et al. "2021 AAPM Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Climate Survey Executive Summary." International Journal of Radiation Oncology* Biology* Physics (2022).

[4] Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, "Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action," Exhibits, https://exhibits.library.utoronto.ca/items/show/2420.

[5] Williamson, Theresa, C. Rory Goodwin, and Peter A. Ubel. "Minority tax reform—avoiding overtaxing minorities when we need them most." New England Journal of Medicine 384, no. 20 (2021): 1877-1879.

[6] Accessibility Guidelines for Presenters. American Public Health Association. (2022). (Accessed: 12 March 2023). URL: https://www.apha.org/Events-and-Meetings/Annual/Presenters/Accessibility-Guidelines