

THE HOME STRETCH

2021 YEAR
IN REVIEW



Canadian
Paediatric
Society

As “There’s no place like home” became “No place *but* home” and the pandemic course stretched from sprint to marathon, the CPS also lengthened stride. Members helping children, youth, and families on the home front got us across the finish line in 2021, and they deserve so much more than a medal!

Solid teamwork, shifting seasons

Drs. Dorothy Moore and **Laura Sauvé** guided clinical document development over every obstacle. Dr. Moore, as CPS liaison with the National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI), transformed multiple high-level vaccine documents and updates into [statements for clinicians](#), then helped turn this fast-changing information into family-friendly information. Dr. Sauvé, as chair of the Infectious Diseases and Immunization Committee (IDIC), served as media spokesperson and co-edited, with **Dr. Daphne Korczak**, a special COVID issue of *Paediatrics & Child Health*. As chair of the CPS Mental Health Task Force, Dr. Korczak’s work on the lasting effects of public health measures, parental stress, and social isolation on children and youth informed a [policy brief](#) co-authored by the Mental Health Commission of Canada, with recommendations to government.

An educated response. Keeping the information doors wide open to vaccine-hesitant parents has never been more important, prompting the CPS to develop [Moving to Acceptance](#), an online module on best strategies to address COVID-19-related vaccine hesitancy. Delivered through [Pedagogy](#), the course was developed by a team led by **Drs. Ian Gemmill** and **Isabelle Viel-Thériault**.

Hats off to **Drs. Cora Constaninescu** and **Marina Salvadori** for producing webinars on the COVID-19 [vaccine for 5-to-11-year-olds](#), and to IDIC members who kept families in-the-know with handouts on [masking](#), recognizing and managing [illness](#), and [immunization](#). Our 2021 online Annual Conference included COVID-related sessions on mental health, vaccine hesitancy, eating disorders, and child maltreatment. CPS Section-hosted [National Grand Rounds](#) featured presentations on eating disorders, MIS-C, COVID vaccines for 5-to-11-year-olds, and global effects associated with COVID.

The inside track. [Canadian Paediatric Surveillance Program \(CPSP\)](#) results from Canada’s largest study of children and youth hospitalized with SARS-CoV-2 were published in the [Canadian Medical Association Journal \(CMAJ\)](#) last fall. Data showing that pre-school and school-aged children were at [low risk](#) for developing severe disease—at least before the Delta and Omicron variants emerged—proved defining for public health authorities and policy-makers alike. Led by **Drs. Charlotte Moore Hepburn** (CPS Medical Affairs Director), **Shaun Morris** (Hospital

“[Kids] speak with enthusiasm when it comes to rolling up their sleeves. They want to protect themselves, they want to protect their friends, their teachers, their grandparents, and their broader community”.

Dr. Charlotte Moore Hepburn, CPS Medical Affairs Director, speaking on CBC Winnipeg’s ‘The Morning Edition’ in October

“Eating disorders are quite unique in medicine in the sense that they are complex bio-psycho-social illnesses. They don’t fall neatly into the realm of physical medicine, nor do they fall neatly into the realm of mental health”.

Dr. Ellie Vyver, Adolescent Medicine Specialist at Alberta Children’s Hospital and co-principal investigator of a new CPSP study on anorexia nervosa

for Sick Children), **Fatima Kakkar** and **Olivier Drouin** (CHU Sainte-Justine), with **Danny Farrar** (a Senior Data Analyst at the Hospital for Sick Children), the team was also able to identify paediatric risk factors for severe disease.

Also on the surveillance front, [Immunization Monitoring Program ACTive](#) (IMPACT) investigators **Drs. Julie Bettinger, Scott Halperin, Jesse Papenburg, Manish Sadarangani, and Karina Top** deserve a special shout-out for being stalwart (yet nimble!) media spokespeople on COVID vaccine-related science and issues. Since the start of the adolescent COVID vaccination program, IMPACT centres have been monitoring for, and reporting, any serious adverse events following immunization (AEFIs) directly to the Canadian AEFI Surveillance System.

Tales out of school. **Dr. Mark Feldman**, CPS Vice President for 2020-21, co-wrote [multiple letters](#) with **Drs. Kim Dow, Daphne Korczak, and Eddy Lau**, to officials in Ontario. They urged a safe return to in-person learning across the province—where schools stayed closed longer than in any other Canadian jurisdiction—along with reopening playgrounds, sports fields, and other recreational spaces. [Letters](#) to other provincial ministers of education in the summer of 2021 called for back-to-school planning, the restoration of cancelled extracurricular activities, and increased funding to support recovery strategies and meet the mental health needs of children and youth impacted by educational disruptions.

A new winner’s circle. A special award was given in December to CPS members who led our COVID response throughout the pandemic. Named for past president **Dr. Sam Wong**—who kept us on course in an extraordinary year—this new certificate of merit recognized leadership in advocacy, education, and surveillance.

Recipients so honored were **Dr. Kevin Chan** (for work in acute care); **Dr. Daphne Korczak** (mental health); **Drs. Nicole Le Saux, Dorothy Moore, Marina Salvadori and Laura Sauvé** (infectious diseases and immunization); **Dr. Charlotte Moore Hepburn** and **Dr. Shaun Morris** (surveillance); **Dr. Michael Narvey** (neonatology); and **Dr. Geert ‘t Jong** (paediatric drugs and therapeutics).

Markers and milestones

[Paediatrics & Child Health](#) marked its [25th anniversary](#) in 2021, thanks to the consummate skills of current editor-in-chief, **Dr. Joan Robinson**, former (and founding) editor-in-chief **Dr. Noni MacDonald**, and a committed editorial board of paediatric experts, past and present. The journal played an important role in disseminating timely COVID-related information, with articles on how best to care for [socially vulnerable](#) children and youth, [diabetic ketoacidosis](#) in children with T1D, [virtual care](#), [anorexia nervosa](#), and lifestyle and mental health symptoms in [children with ADHD](#), along with a special theme issue [on COVID-19 effects](#).

Last year also marked the 20th anniversary of [Healthy Child Uganda](#), a project led in Canada by **Dr. Jenn Brenner**, a paediatrician at the University of Calgary. The CPS partnered with the Mbarara University of Science and Technology and Canadian universities to help launch the new [HAY! initiative](#) (short for Healthy Adolescents and Young People). HAY! focuses on teens and young adults as well as mothers, babies, and young children, and was a response in part to COVID restrictions, which deprived Ugandan youth of work and school opportunities and exacerbated already harsh economic realities. [HAY! started virtually](#), using outdoor focus groups to target youth health issues such as family planning, gender-based violence, menstrual hygiene, risk-taking behaviours, sexually transmitted infections, and mental health.





The CPSP marked 25 years of investigating rare but impactful paediatric diseases and conditions with landmark studies of [congenital syphilis](#) rates (**Dr. Jared Bullard** and **Dr. Carsten Krueger**)—which have never been higher in Canada—and first-time hospitalizations for [anorexia nervosa](#) (**Dr. Debra Katzman** and **Dr. Ellie Vyver**), which significantly increased in number and severity during the pandemic. One-time survey results also revealed that virtual care may contribute to missed cases of child maltreatment, and confirmed that the pandemic responses had troubling unintended consequences for young people living with medical complexity in 2021.

A new edition of [ACoRN: Acute Care of at-Risk Newborns](#), published last spring by Oxford University Press, was the first step in a revitalized teaching program for stabilizing at-risk or unwell newborns. Lead editors **Drs. Jill Boulton** and **Kevin Coughlin** also worked with ACoRN educator **Dr. Deepak Manhas** and a select group of experienced instructors to fine-tune program delivery and teaching tools before roll-out. A companion workbook, [ACoRN: The Essential Guide](#), was published last fall with a set of user-friendly laminates. Dr. Coughlin edited this guide with **Debbie Aylward, RN**, a dedicated ACoRN teacher and former perinatal consultant with the Champlain Maternal Newborn Regional Program.

Front lines and frontiers

The CPS's [Antiracism Initiative](#) gained traction through 2021, thanks to its strongest champions: **Dr. Kassia Johnson**, developmental paediatrician and Early Years Task Force member,

and past president **Dr. Sam Wong**. A new [Antiracism Policy](#) released in December applies this lens to all CPS work—from education to leadership development to human resources. The policy acknowledges and endeavours to eliminate implicit and systemic anti-Indigenous, anti-Black, and other racist tendencies from CPS structures, policies, and procedures. Each step in this process has been collaborative, and the next one will be to develop implementation tools and training so that working groups across the organization can apply antiracist principles and approaches to current work.

A new learning module based on the recently revised [Read, Speak, Sing](#) statement was developed collaboratively with the Canadian Children's Literacy Foundation by **Drs. Alyson Shaw, Lauren Kitney, and Robin Williams**. Designed for family physicians, paediatricians, nurses, and allied professionals, [Early Literacy Promotion: The A-B-Cs for busy clinicians](#) is a self-directed, one-hour program featuring routine strategies for counselling families on early literacy and language development in any practice setting.

Thanks to **Drs. Alène Toulany, Jan Willem Gorter, and Megan Harrison**, the **Adolescent Health Committee's new statement** on transition for youth with medically complex needs got well underway in 2021. Past President **Dr. Ruth Grimes** brought force and conviction to a driving principle, namely, that reaching the age of majority does not automatically make young people capable of managing their own health care, especially when it means managing medications, juggling appointments, and advocating for special needs. But planning and anticipatory guidance can get them where they need to be.

“The story of syphilis in Canada is ... deeply rooted in the social determinants of health, social disparities, access to health care and stigma, so it's ... really complicated”.

Dr. Carsten Krueger, paediatrician at CHEO and co-principal investigator of a new CPSP study on congenital syphilis

Dr. Anne Hicks, president-elect of the **Paediatric Environmental Health Section** in 2021 and an assistant professor of respiratory medicine at the University of Alberta, deserves a big bouquet for compiling a [dedicated page of environmental resources](#) for families and clinicians. Dr. Hicks has included a history-taking tool, specialized fact sheets, information on asthma, mold, lead, formaldehyde, weather, and more.

The **CPS Residents Section** hosted a webinar last fall to encourage med students to enter paediatrics. More than 150 students from across Canada participated as a varied panel of residents and physicians talked about the joys and challenges of their chosen field. Practical guidance on opportunities (generalist, subspecialist, urban centre, rural)—and cases!—were featured. Special thanks to: **Dr. Katie Girgulis**, Residents Section president, for moderating, student liaison **Nardin Kirolos**, and panelists **Drs. Anne-Sophie Gervais, Amelia Kellar, Cheyenne LaForme, Kaleigh MacIsaac, Marianne McKenna, Sharon Smile, and Sam Wong**. A recording of this webinar is available at the CPS Member Centre.

Community chestnuts

Drs. Sarah Lawrence (Children’s Hospital of Eastern Ontario) and **Beth Cummings** (IWK Health Centre) led the development and launch last August of a new [online learning module](#) based on content from the [Diabetes@School](#) website. Offering information and guidance to teachers, coaches, educational assistants, and

others working in school settings, the module ensures that students of any age living with type 1 diabetes can, with help, manage their condition effectively while at school.

Dr. Nicholas Chadi’s work as constant champion on the youth vaping/smoking files was recognized with a [Victor Marchesseault Advocacy Award](#) at this year’s annual conference, but he’s been active in the media, advised governments, and [advanced research](#) on these and other fronts for years. A revised [statement](#) on vaping, released in April and co-written with **Drs. Richard Bélanger and Ellie Vyver**, was shared with ministers of health in every province and territory, and with Health Canada’s Tobacco Control Directorate. An adolescent medicine specialist and professor at the University of Montreal, Dr. Chadi also advocates for youth mental health and well-being, especially on issues of addiction and risk-taking.

Best thanks (and sweet dreams!) to CPS members who helped revise the [Joint Statement on Safe Sleep](#) from the Public Health Agency of Canada. **Drs. Claude Cyr, Michael Hill, April Kam, Denis Leduc, Alisa Lipson, and Peter Wong** participated on the advisory group who, with PHAC experts and Baby’s Breath Canada, developed recommendations on sleep positioning, exposure to smoking, and bed sharing to prevent SIDS and other sleep-related infant deaths. Room sharing and breastfeeding are strongly associated with decreasing risk for SIDS, and [parent information](#) on the Caring for Kids website has been updated accordingly.



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