

# CAEP Residents' Section: A Unified Voice for Canadian Emergency Medicine Trainees

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## INTRODUCTION

Since its inception in 2000, the Residents' Section (RS) has become an increasingly important part of the Canadian Association of Emergency Physicians (CAEP) and the Canadian emergency medicine (EM) community. Its mission is "to unify emergency medicine residents on a national scale and bring a resident voice to the CAEP board."<sup>1</sup> The foundation of the RS consists of the four strategic pillars of CAEP: advocating for emergency resident physicians and patients, connecting emergency resident physicians, providing leading EM education, and providing a forum for research. Through initiatives, national projects, and position statements, the CAEP RS continues to grow and thrive based on these four pillars. This report reviews the past successes and challenges of the CAEP RS and its future direction, and serves as a call to action for increased resident participation in the organization.

### Advocating for emergency resident physicians and patients

The RS has experienced significant growth in membership and has doubled both in terms of absolute numbers and as a percentage of the total CAEP membership over the last seven years (Table 1). The role of the RS within CAEP has been reinforced through the writing of "terms of reference" and the granting of a voting seat on the Board of Directors. The recent addition of a resident representative on the Public Affairs Committee ensures a constant resident perspective during the development of national

position statements. Currently, the committee discussions have focused on recommendations regarding air ambulances, long-term care facilities, access block, and overcrowding. In 2015, a new position was created, the CAEP RS VP Academic, which will ensure a resident presence in CAEP's Academic Section. The RS VP Academic resident representative will provide direct information and seek resident feedback about new directions in EM education, research, and academic symposia. As both representation and involvement of residents have grown across the CAEP governance, a thriving collaborative network has emerged.<sup>2</sup>

### Connecting emergency resident physicians

A recent pan-Canadian survey of EM residents shows a majority employ online educational resources to supplement their residency training.<sup>3</sup> In addition, social media has become an important channel for Knowledge Translation (KT).<sup>4,5</sup> An important function of the CAEP RS is to enhance KT through active collaboration with both the *CJEM* social media team and Free Open Access Medical Education (FOAMed) champions across Canada. By this, the CAEP RS facilitates dialogue between trainees and educators while promoting Canadian EM. Specifically, the CAEP RS's communications platforms, including its official Facebook and Twitter accounts, have experienced an exponential growth and serve as portals to promote Canadian FOAMed content through podcasts and blogs, such as The Skeptics Guide to Emergency Medicine, CAEP TV, Emergency Medicine Cases, and BoringEM.

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**Table 1. CAEP resident membership from 2007 to 2014\***

Year	Resident Members	Total Membership	Percentage of CAEP Membership
2007	178	1,580	11%
2008	195	1,687	12%
2009	179	1,801	10%
2010	245	1,668	15%
2011	320	1,966	16%
2012	311	1,958	16%
2013	413	2,108	20%
2014	414	2,137	19%

\*Source: CAEP Member Services.

There is a great need for medical students to be exposed to EM early in their training to foster interest and involvement in the EM specialty. The CAEP Student Mentorship Program provides an invaluable opportunity for medical students to learn about EM residency programs and to receive career advice. There are currently 96 medical students being mentored by 46 residents in the program. The resident mentors and medical students regularly meet via phone, email, and social media to discuss challenges and solutions to their professional development as emergency physicians. According to the CAEP RS Secretary's annual report, the feedback about the program from medical students is consistently positive. Participating residents can receive professional and personal satisfaction by giving back to their profession and to their future colleagues.

### ***Providing leading EM education and providing a forum for research***

The RS promotes the work of the CAEP Academic Section Education Working Group, which includes: Featured Education Innovations (educational initiatives reports), Great Evidence in Medical Education Summaries (GEMeS) (literature summaries), and CAEP Cast (monthly podcasts). These educational resources are used by residents to enhance their learning and teaching skills. In terms of resource development, the CAEP RS has created a fellowship program database, available on the CAEP website, highlighting options available to Canadian EM residents in both Canada and the United States.

The CAEP RS Executive Committee celebrates outstanding leadership and education through the presentation of two annual awards: the Resident Leadership

Award, given to a resident who has made an exceptional contribution to the development of Canadian EM, and the Teacher of the Year Award, given to an EM educator who has made a remarkable contribution to teaching. The CAEP RS actively encourages all members to participate in scientific dialogue and celebrate the achievement of its members. At the annual abstract competition, the CAEP Research Committee provides five grants to junior investigators, including residents, and recognizes the top resident research abstracts submitted by CAEP resident members. At the CAEP annual conference, experienced researchers and aspiring residents are brought together for an insightful exchange of ideas through the annual CJEM Resident Research Forum.

### **CHALLENGES**

One of the main challenges for the CAEP RS Executive Committee in the past years was ensuring full representation of the resident cohort with respect to geographical diversity and training stream diversity. With the arrival of the first resident from the CFPC-EM stream and a more balanced representation of residents from various provinces in the upcoming 2015-2016 executive committee, it is anticipated that the CAEP RS will gain even more participation from residents throughout Canada.

Changes in the structure of the CAEP RS have been represented by a "punctuated equilibrium," as described by Beabout.<sup>6</sup> This type of episodic change is often represented by a year-long period of stasis, and a short period of change (typically initiated at the CAEP Annual Conference), where significant re-culturing and restructuring both occur. With this history in mind, the CAEP RS must develop strategies to facilitate positive changes throughout the year. To achieve this goal, the CAEP RS has established a close collaboration with the CAEP Manager of Member Services and has utilized its online platforms as a means of enhanced communication and collaboration with its resident members to expedite organizational changes.

### **VISION FOR THE FUTURE**

The purpose of the CAEP RS is to advocate and work for residents. The foundation of the RS will continue to center on the four strategic pillars of CAEP. It will build on its successes in promoting free educational resources and developing the resident-student mentorship program.

It will also further expand support for residents by developing resources that will directly address their most pressing and current issues. With the advent of competency-based medical education, residency training is on the verge of major transformations. Important priorities will be to keep resident members up-to-date with the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada and host dialogues on the transition process to the new curriculum through social media platforms. Furthermore, as described in the 2013 Royal College Employment Study, residents “report a lack of adequate career counselling and information about jobs.”<sup>7</sup> In order to help residents plan their future career in an increasingly competitive workplace, the CAEP RS will actively continue to update its members on options for enhanced competency training<sup>8</sup> and fellowship opportunities, and further enhance staff-resident mentoring both online and at the annual conference. EM residents are the future of CAEP, and their involvement is vital for the health and growth of the association and the specialty as a whole. The CAEP RS is here to serve as the resident voice of Canadian EM.

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