



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Shortage of anesthesiologists impacts delivery of surgical, acute and chronic pain services

More residency training positions needed

The Canadian Anesthesiologists' Society (CAS) has become concerned over the last several years with the increasing number of positions for anesthesiologists that are being advertised but remain unfilled. In addition, the number of provinces that send physician recruiters to the CAS Annual Meeting and the number of provincial medical associations and individual members of CAS who report difficulties in recruiting anesthesiologists to vacant positions at their hospital sites continues to increase. We believe that these shortages of anesthesiologists are not anecdotal, isolated, nor do they reflect a temporary shortfall.

In order to address these shortages, CAS, in partnership with the Association of Canadian Universities Departments of Anesthesia (ACUDA) has sent two letters in the last two years requesting an increase in the number of residency training positions in Anesthesiology. This request recognizes that any increases to the trainee pool in a single year will not generate a change in the number of physician-anesthesiologists for at least 4 to 5 years. CAS and ACUDA have also been actively engaged in developing physician-led anesthesia care teams that aim to increase the productivity and quality standards of anesthesia care provided at hospital and surgical sites in Canada.

Anesthesiologists play a vital role in the delivery of surgical services to Canadians. In addition, anesthesiologists also play a pivotal role in the delivery of acute and chronic pain services. More recently, they have had a key role in helping to manage the current opioid epidemic through the development of transitional pain programs and the promotion of changes in prescribing practices. Shortage of anesthesiologists is impacting on these programs.

The shortage of physician anesthesiologists in rural and remote communities is most acute, but this shortage is now spreading to larger towns and cities. This shortage will continue to worsen as the current workforce of anesthesiologists ages and retires. We believe that vacancies in anesthesiology positions, a result of insufficient training of specialist anesthesiologists, will result in bottlenecks for Canadians to access essential surgical services, states CAS president Dr Daniel Bainbridge.

CAS will continue to advocate for an increase in the number of training positions, as well as continue to advocate for and develop anesthesiology care teams to improve Canadians access to physician anesthesiology services in Canada.

About Canadian Anesthesiologists' Society

The Canadian Anesthesiologists' Society (CAS) is the national specialty society for anesthesiology in Canada. The CAS was founded in 1943 as a not-for-profit, voluntary organization and is guided by its vision of innovative leadership and excellence in anesthesiology, perioperative care, and patient safety. The CAS represents 3,000 members (anesthesiologists, GP anesthetists, residents, Anesthesia Assistants, etc.) across Canada and around the world and is dedicated to promoting excellence in patient care through research, education and advocacy.

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