



## THE MYALGIC ENCEPHALOMYELITIS ASSOCIATION OF ONTARIO (MEAO)

*MEAO - an organization representing and supporting the medical conditions of Myalgic Encephalomyelitis/Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (ME/CFS), Fibromyalgia (FM) and Environmental Sensitivities/Multiple Chemical Sensitivity (ES/MCS)*

### DIRECTORS' REPORT

#### ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

September 23, 2020

The Myalgic Encephalomyelitis Association of Ontario (MEAO) last held an Annual General Meeting (AGM) on June 26, 2019. This report details activities from that meeting to present.

Since the last AGM, the MEAO board has been busy with several issues, predominantly with drafting and amending the new proposed Objects, consultations with our corporate lawyers, communications with the Ontario Ministry of Health regarding implementation of the recommendations of the report of the Task Force on Environmental Health; that is until the COVID-19 pandemic put everything on hold.

We had planned and booked an awareness day event at Queen's Park for May 12<sup>th</sup> the official awareness day for ME/CFS, FM and ES/MCS but the serious COVID-19 pandemic restrictions and lockdown meant cancellation of the event and cancellation of all government business, except of course, for dealing with the pandemic.

We had planned to have an AGM in June but once again, pandemic meant postponing and planning a different way of handling the AGM.

#### **UPDATE ON IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE TASK FORCE ON ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH**

The Final Report of the task force was submitted to the Ontario Ministry of Health in December, 2018. After many delays, the report was made public on May 15, 2019. Since that time, MEAO has requested the Ontario Ministry of Health to advise regarding the implementation process of the recommendations of the final report.

In MEAO's Newsletter and Action Alert of January, 2020, we included a copy of MEAO's letter to Minister Christine Elliott asking for information and action regarding implementation. That letter appears to have brought action because we were advised in February that Minister Elliott sent a letter to the President of Public Health Ontario (PHO) asking for PHO's assistance in leading a review of the final report of the Task Force on Environmental Health.

MEAO then advised in our Newsletter of May, 2020 that the objective of this work is to assess the recommendations of the Task Force and identify real solutions that will directly benefit Ontarians. PHO was given a six month time period to conduct this review. Dr. Brian Schwartz, the Vice-President of Public Health Ontario was appointed to lead this initiative. He is also associate professor at the Dalla Lana School of Public Health, University of Toronto. Among his areas of expertise are public health, emergency preparedness and response, emergency medical services many areas of research within public health.

We further advised you that just prior to COVID-19 restrictions, MEAO was advised of this development and we met with Dr. Schwartz to begin to discuss next steps. We were very heartened by Dr. Schwartz's commitment to proceed quickly and in a collaborative manner.

Then the COVID-19 pandemic continued to evolve at a shocking rate and a province-wide lockdown was enforced. Public Health Ontario is heavily involved in the management of COVID-19 and as such, all other activities put on hold.

Over the summer, we have been in regular contact with Dr. Schwartz's office to inquire on the status and when the work will resume. He continues to reiterate his commitment to continue with his mandate.

Recently, we have been receiving signals that the work is going to resume. We were hopeful that we could have had Dr. Schwartz as a guest speaker for the AGM but unfortunately, the official approvals have not yet been received to resume the work so he was unable to join us. However, we are optimistic that we will see progress over the fall months.

**As a reminder,** in our newsletters, we have given links numerous times to the Interim Report of the Task Force on Environmental Health and the Final Report of the task force.

Here again for convenience are the links:

**The final report of the task force is entitled –**

*Care Now: An Action Plan to Improve Care for People with Myalgic Encephalomyelitis/Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (ME/CFS), Fibromyalgia (FM) and Environmental Sensitivities/Multiple Chemical Sensitivity (ES/MCS)*

**To access and download the final report go to:**

[http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/common/ministry/publications/reports/environmental\\_health\\_2018/default.aspx](http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/common/ministry/publications/reports/environmental_health_2018/default.aspx)

**To access and download the interim report of the task force, go to:**

*Time for Leadership: Recognizing and Improving Care for those with ME/CFS, FM and ES/MCS*

[http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/common/ministry/publications/reports/environmental\\_health\\_2017/task\\_force\\_on\\_environmental\\_health\\_report.pdf](http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/common/ministry/publications/reports/environmental_health_2017/task_force_on_environmental_health_report.pdf)

### **MEAO OBJECTS:**

On July 10<sup>th</sup>, 2020 MEAO sent out to all members the Call for Nominations and the same notification included a Communique regarding MEAO's proposed new Objects. We asked for members feedback to the proposed new Objects by August 9<sup>th</sup>.

The communique explained the expanded scope of MEAO's work which was that approximately 10 years ago, MEAO began to represent the three conditions of myalgic encephalomyelitis/ chronic fatigue syndrome (ME/CFS), fibromyalgia (FM) and environmental sensitivities/multiple chemical sensitivity (ES/MCS).

The communique further explained that the **expanded scope** of MEAO was officially recognized by resolution passed at the AGM of 2018 as follows:

“BE IT RESOLVED that the MEAO membership recognize and officially acknowledge that MEAO is an association that provides voice and support to individuals, their families, caregivers who are living with complex, chronic environmentally-linked medical conditions, focused on by not limited to myalgic encephalomyelitis/chronic fatigue syndrome (ME/CFS), fibromyalgia (FM) and environmental sensitivities/multiple chemical sensitivity (ES/MCS) in Ontario.”

The July communique further explained the process to update the Objects and gave the proposed Objects that were adopted by the MEAO board of directors in January, 2020.

MEAO asked membership for feedback on the proposed Objects and MEAO's reply to the feedback was included in Communique No. 2 sent out on August 24<sup>th</sup>.

In MEAO's AGM package of August 24<sup>th</sup>, 2020, Communique No. 2 - Update on MEAO Objects was attached which included the Feedback from members together with the MEAO board's reply to the members' feedback.

The MEAO replies to the feedback were in-depth.

On September 17<sup>th</sup>, 2020, MEAO sent out a further Notice to all members which included a draft of Special Resolution of the Members of MEAO regarding some changes in the wording of the proposed Objects to give better clarity. The Notice of September 17<sup>th</sup> further advised that MEAO's corporate lawyer has been in close contact with the Office of the Public Guardian and Trustee (OPGT) to ensure that the wording of the proposed Objects meets the standards for CRA purposes. To that end, the OPGT recommended a few minor changes to MEAO's draft Objects. The new wording is very similar to the previous draft but reorders a few sentences to provide better clarity.

At today's AGM, a Motion is being presented for the members to approve the Special Resolution containing the new proposed Objects. We are pleased that Alan Belaiche, of Belaiche Law is in attendance and he'll explain the process for approval and to answer any of your questions.

Once the members approve the Special Resolution, the MEAO board will submit an Application for Supplementary Letters Patent which will include the revised Objects. It will take almost three months to process but the pre-approval by OPGT should ensure the process proceeds smoothly.

### **CHANGING THE NAME OF THE ORGANIZATION:**

The next step will be to renew the name of MEAO to reflect the three conditions. The MEAO board is consulting with our lawyer about the processes. Again, we'll keep you advised of developments via newsflash or newsletter. The name change will require a vote of members.

### **FINANCIAL STATEMENTS:**

- MEAO's financial statements for the year ending 2019 were distributed to all members

- The MEAO Board has once again engaged the firm of Welch LLP, who are proficient in charity and not-for-profit organizations, as our chartered accountants.
- The report of Welch LLP concerning the MEAO's financial statements of 2019 was presented for approval at the AGM

### CALL FOR NOMINATIONS:

- The Call for Nominations which included attributes that a nominee should ideally have, was sent out in July, and the membership was given 30 days to reply. The Declaration of Consent and Commitment and the Code of Conduct was also attached to the form.
- See Nomination Report for further details.
- According to the Bylaws, the Board has the authority to appoint vacancies. After the AGM, if any member is interested in joining the board, please contact the MEAO Board of Directors.

### MEAO'S website:

In 2020-21 we are also committed to updating MEAO's website

<https://www.meao.ca/index.html>

Our previous webmaster was not able to continue with updating due to illness and then retirement. As the cost of hiring webmasters to construct a new website is thousands of dollars which MEAO does not have, we continued to look for a technical person to do a full reconstruction of the site that we could maintain ourselves. We have located a technical person who is in the midst of completely redoing and updating the MEAO site. However, it will take time to be refreshed. We'll keep you advised but in the meantime, any new developments **will be immediately conveyed** to you via MEAO's newsletters and newsflashes.

The current website does contain very important links:

- How to become an MEAO member
- The links to the documents contained in the Business Case Proposal for a Centre of Excellence in Environmental Health
- Link to the task force interim report
- The links to the joint website of MEAO and Alliance for Healthier Communities (formerly AOHC) being Campaign for a Centre of Excellence in Environmental Health – The Time is Now which has numerous informational links and downloads which is at: <http://recognitioninclusionandequity.org/>

## THANK YOU TO MEAO's Board of Directors

We wish to thank the board of directors of 2019-2020 for all of their hard work, contributions and support to MEAO:

Denise Magi, Adrianna Tetley, Keith Deviney, John Doherty and Laurie Menard.

The Directors would also like to say a **special thank you** to all the members and friends of MEAO who made many welcome and generous donations to MEAO.

### MEAO's Website:

<http://www.meao.ca/>

The joint website of MEAO and AOHC being a Campaign for the Ontario Centre of Excellence in Environmental Health:

<http://recognitioninclusionandequity.org/>

### Correspondence to MEAO:

[info@meao.ca](mailto:info@meao.ca)

