

An Open Letter from David Jacobs - Why I Resigned From the OMA Board

Dear Colleagues,

I regret to inform you of my recent resignation from the OMA Board.

In my time as an OMA delegate and my short time on the Board, I have seen the defeat of the tentative 2016 PSA, the resignation of much of the Executive, and an attempt at corporate renewal.

Our OMA is unfortunately burdened by a history that dates back almost to Confederation. That history has resulted in deep and seemingly unshakeable foundations. The foundations are bolstered by mandatory Randed dues and the OMA's representation rights. The steady stream of income and the lack of options for representation have allowed the OMA's bureaucracy to burgeon while diminishing the Association's accountability to members. The failed PSA was a reaction to these shortcomings. The fundamental problems however, remain unchanged.

Now we, as physicians, approach new perils. Our negotiations with the Ford Government have reached their end and we return to arbitration. Premier Ford has been very clear in his support of frontline doctors, yet we are still unable to bridge the gap between our Association and government.

Soon we will be facing yet another Special Council Meeting that will further divide the Association. The outcome of the meeting has the potential to be far worse for some members than many of the deals proposed by government over the past several years. I cannot be a party to this.

My solution to our challenges is change; real change.

Since my resignation from the OMA Board, I have been in discussions with my specialist colleagues. Of the 25 sections that I have reached out to, 24 have shown interest in following a Quebec or BC model of separate representation for specialists and primary care.

This Wednesday a small group of 10 from the 24 sections was chosen to meet face to face with the Premier's representative. The conversation was frank and the message was well received. Specialists of Ontario need to be heard. They need to be able to freely choose who represents them, just as the primary care physicians should be able to do the same.

In a free and democratic society, the right to self determination is paramount. In the weeks to come, further information will be provided as to the mechanism for this historic opportunity for change. The decision to stay or go will rest in the hands of each individual member. Democracy is messy, but over time, it is never wrong.

Best regards,

David Jacobs