

Consumer Advisory Council (CAC)
Terms of Reference
Final May 6, 2007

Vision:

The Consumer Advisory Council: An integral partner in CAN to create a world without arthritis through research.

Mission:

The Consumer Advisory Council ensures the relevance and accessibility of CAN's research to people living with arthritis in Canada

Membership:

The Consumer Advisory Council (hereinafter, "Council") will be comprised of a diverse membership interested in contributing to arthritis research, representing a wide range of arthritis and professional experience, age, culture, language and geographic region.

The Council will be comprised of representatives from each of the following provinces, territories and communities:

- British Columbia
- Alberta
- Saskatchewan
- Manitoba
- Ontario
- Quebec
- Northern Canada: Yukon, Northwest Territory, Nunavut
- 3 representatives from Atlantic Canada, representing
 - Nova Scotia
 - New Brunswick
 - Prince Edward Island
 - Newfoundland
- Aboriginal Community.

A Chair or two Co-Chairs will be elected by the Council.

The following values and operating principles are central to the Council members and the work of the group:

- Accountability
- Meaningful inclusion
- Integrity
- Transparency
- Equitable partnership

Nomination process

Six months prior to a membership vacancy, a recruitment posting is sent through the Council to partnering consumer groups such as the Allied member organizations. Along with this process, each member who is leaving the Council, may recommend another person(s) for consideration.

Within one month's time after the initial posting, candidates for membership are required to submit a CV/resume to the Council detailing their arthritis volunteer, disease and professional experience. Candidates will be approved by consensus of CAC membership. References will be required and will be verified by the co-chairs.

A three-month mentorship transition time will be made available to all new Council members. This will be supplemented by the Orientation Manual which will provide guidance to new members.

Each outgoing Council member or Allied member will provide an exit report to the Council to ensure institutional memory and recommendations for capacity building.

Membership Selection Criteria

Selection criteria for new Council members includes, but is not restricted to, the following:

- A strong interest in arthritis research;
- Informed on a broad range of arthritis issues;
- Experience in consumer-centered arthritis organizations;
- The willingness and ability to articulate the needs and concerns of people with arthritis at all CAN meetings and activities;
- Barring unforeseen issues or complications with one's arthritis, willingness to serve a minimum two year commitment to the Council;
- The interest and desire to receive appropriate training in order to participate in CAN Peer Review;
- The ability and interest to train and mentor other arthritis consumers interested in research participation;
- Willingness and commitment to advocate for arthritis research in established and innovative ways;
- Ability to prepare and submit a quarterly report of activities relating to CAC detailing hours, type and affiliation of each activity (template supplied);
- Internet access, computer literacy and ability to work through email and teleconferences.

Chair/Co-Chair Responsibilities

The following points detail the specific responsibilities of the Council Chair/Co-Chairs:

- Along with CAN administration, work to ensure that Council functions within the budget envelope for that fiscal year;
- Provide leadership to establish consensus on all Council decisions prior to implementation;

- Initiate and support dynamic liaison with CAN management and administration;
- Encourage/assign Council member roles;
- Ensure Council member participation in CAN's Annual Conference, SRIs, Committee meetings and other developing interests;
- Provide leadership to establish budget priorities, monitor disbursements together with the delegated Member and in conjunction with CAN's accountant;
- Maintain a consistent and strong advocacy stance on all matters relating to CAN research activities to effectively represent Canadians living with arthritis;
- Appoint Council members based on skill set and interest in the CAN Training and Education (TEC) Awards review committee and the Scientific and Medical Advisory Committee (SMAC);
- Provide leadership on implementing and overseeing Council member recruitment and establish mentorship to assist with their engagement in Council activities;
- At the 18-month point, the Co-chairs review and evaluate with each of the members, availability, commitment and suitability for re-appointment;
- Recognize the vital importance and necessity for ongoing communication with all Council partners and stakeholders;
- Prepare the draft agenda for teleconference and in-person meetings two weeks prior to the meeting;
- Monitor progress of the Council's strategic plan and provide assistance to members when and where needed;
- Ensure that Council quarterly reports are prepared and disseminated on a timely basis.

Member Responsibilities

- To support basic and clinical arthritis research within CAN and in Canada;
- To work to ensure that the Council Strategic Plan harmonizes with the CAN Strategic Plan;
- To participate in training to ensure effective participation in Council and CAN;
- Based on member availability, to participate in all rounds annually of CAN's Training and Education (TEC) Grant Review and Scientific and Medical Advisory Committees;
- Training and mentoring of fellow Council and allied members;
- To participate regularly at the decision-making level in arthritis research within the CAN;
Areas of participation may include:
 - CAN Board
 - CAN Research Management Committee
 - CAN Strategic Vision Committee
 - CAN Training and Education Committee and Review Panel
 - CAN Scientific and Medical Advisory Committee
 - CAN Membership Committee
 - CAN Partnership & Sustainability Committee
 - CAN Commercialization & Business Development Committee
 - CAN Strategic Research Initiatives (SRI's)
 - CAN Strategic Research Initiatives Development (SRID's)
 - CAN Strategic Research Resources (SRR's)
 - CAN Discovery Advancement Programs (DAP's)

- To seek and secure appropriate training which will allow Members to participate in CAN, the arthritis research community-at-large, industry and government in a meaningful way;
- To provide CAN orientation to people with arthritis who may participate in CAN projects or activities;
- To assist CAN researchers with the identification of people with arthritis for participation in CAN projects;
- To support the Knowledge Transfer and Education (KTE) of arthritis research information to people with arthritis and consumers-at-large as well as the marketplace.
- To collaborate with other consumer-centered arthritis organizations on consumer and research initiatives.
- To be recognized as a leading consumer authority on arthritis research and its outcomes in North America.
- To liaise with arthritis related organizations in province/ territory and nationally.
- To attend local, provincial/territorial and international conferences and workshops on an as needed and based on suitability.
- To participate as a consumer member in the planning, design and organization of conferences and workshops.
- To prepare quarterly reports of activities undertaken on behalf of CAC and other arthritis related organizations.
- To liaise with government on arthritis advocacy issues on an as needed basis
- To attend all in-person Council meetings and the annual CAN Scientific Conference;
- To participate on teleconference meetings.

Allied Members

Developing partnerships with other arthritis consumer groups ensures broad community representation and participation in the work of the Council and the CAN. As such, people with arthritis from other arthritis consumer organizations will be invited to participate on the Council as representatives of allied organizations.

Allied Organizations at present may include at least one representative (allied member) from groups such as but not restricted to:

- Arthritis Consumer Experts
- Arthritis Montreal
- Arthritis Research Centre of Canada - Consumer Advisory Board
- Canadian Arthritis Patient Alliance
- Children's Arthritis Foundation
- Cochrane Collaboration
- Patient Partners in Arthritis

Allied members will participate in all CAC teleconferences and face to face meetings. Allied members may take on an expanded role as required by CAC.

Each Allied Organization will be invited to put forward several persons for consideration as an allied member of the Council, to replace retiring allied members. As with representatives from provinces and communities, the final decision regarding membership will be made by CAC.

Membership Term

The Council Chair/Co-Chairs and Member term is two years, with an opportunity to serve an additional two-year term. The maximum length of time a member may serve on the Council is four years.

All members of CAC are selected for their interest in arthritis research and their capacity to fully and continuously participate as a member of a national organization that recognizes and requires the full participation of its members. Members are people living with arthritis who are able to participate without a long interruption (three consecutive months being the maximum that CAC/CAN can accept). This is in the interest of the demands that CAC activities require of the group as a whole. When members are unable to effectively participate for three months, their responsibilities and their ability to participate then become the responsibility of existing members who are also people living with arthritis. Notification to Council of inability to participate is the responsibility of each member including allied members.

For this reason, all CAC members will be eligible for a 2 year term, subject to a second term based on the member's ability to fully participate in CAC. At the 18-month point, the Co-chairs review with each of the members, availability, commitment and suitability for re-appointment. During the two year term, if a member is unable to participate in the activities of CAC as a full member for more than three months, CAC will recruit a replacement for that person.

Membership Term – Allied Members

Allied member terms will be same as a Council member term. Staggered terms will be implemented to ensure proper membership stewardship.

Terms will be two years in length and not to exceed two consecutive terms. During this term, allied members will be subject to the same participation roles and responsibilities as other Council members.

Emeritus Members:

Both full CAC and allied members who have completed their four year term in good standing may be offered the position of emeritus member at the first CAC meeting following their departure. These members could continue to be involved and attend the ASC at the discretion of the CAC.

Accountability

The Council Chair/Co-Chairs report the plans and progress of the Council to the CAN Management and membership and allied members at all in-person and teleconference meetings and through CANnections.

The Council will post its strategic plans and progress on the Council pages of CAN's website, as well as communicate on a regular basis with the CAN members and allied members.

A quarterly report will be provided to CAN management.

The Council is accountable to people with arthritis "at-large" by reporting its work plans and progress on the Council's web pages and to its allied members.

Meeting Protocol

The quorum at any Council meeting will be of two-thirds of members (excluding vacancies).

All decisions taken or recommended by the Council are determined through a consensus process.

Face to Face meetings

The Council will meet in three face to face meetings each year including its annual meeting which will be held concurrently with CAN's annual scientific and business meeting. In person meetings will be at least two full days depending on the nature of the business and the requirements of the Council.

Meetings will be hosted in different cities to further advance local and provincial/territorial mentoring skills training to other arthritis consumers across Canada and to promote the work of consumers in CAN and the network's research program. For training sessions at Council face to face meetings, local representation within the arthritis community at large will be invited to participate.

Teleconference meetings

The Council will meet by teleconference on a monthly or "as needed" basis. Teleconferences typically last one to one and a half hours. These meetings focus on Council business.

Council member "teams" or sub-committees are at liberty to hold separate calls to discuss their common activities/work as needed.