

+ BEYOND THE MASK: Interview with Dr. Ted Crosby

Interviewed by Dr. Jane Cooke-Lauder, BA, MBA, DM, CMC, BTM Strategic Consultant, and Emily Hill, the Section's Administrative Coordinator

Dr. Crosby, a Professor of Anesthesiology at the University of Ottawa and a member of the consultant staff at the Ottawa Hospital, is also the President of the Canadian Medical Protective Association and Chair of the Council of the CMPA. Recently Dr. Crosby sat down with the *Beyond the Mask* Strategic Consultant, Dr. Jane Cooke-Lauder, to provide some insights into his experience in leadership roles.



Dr. Crosby has been on the board of the CMPA for almost 14 years and is now in his fifth and last 3-year elected term and will complete his 2-yr term as President in 2016. When asked about his work, Dr. Crosby explained that over the years the CMPA has shed a lot of concerns about being in the public view to become one of the largest providers of continuing medical education for physicians: “We’ve gone from a group that provided relatively little risk management education to an association that now has a major presence in this domain, interacting with major stakeholders at a local, provincial and international level. Medicine is not without risk, we look at how we can help physicians get back to the space they need to be in to have terrific careers,” adding “...I have been a small part of what has been a huge effort over the years. I am very happy with the direction this has gone in and I have been happy to help send the bus in the right direction.”

“We’ve been in exceptional times for awhile now and there is no clear signal that that’s going to change, so if you want to influence the direction that we’re going in you better be out there, you better be on the bus.”

When asked about leadership, Dr. Crosby said taking the first step can be the most important one, just move “...there is an assumption that the people who do this, do it naturally. I think it is a learned thing, you need to get involved.” Dr. Crosby also emphasized the importance of learning from peers who are already involved and being in an environment with an appetite for change, “If you can build a coalition of champions, you can often get an awful lot done – and have a lot of fun in the process.”

We also discussed some of the joys and challenges of getting involved, “Joys are the feeling like maybe you’ve moved the needle a little bit...”

personal satisfaction in being a part of some of these groups and meeting people who are change leaders and are very involved. Challenges: we’re often in resource depleted environments. We sometimes don’t have the resources we need to get done what needs to get done.”

This is especially true in the current climate within which physicians find themselves. Dr. Crosby talked about the importance of being at the table, “One of the things that is pretty clear, in terms of influencing health and public policy, there is just enormous change and it’s not going to stop.” Dr. Crosby discussed the important of showing up, “If you build credibility with the people that will be making the decisions, when you come in and you make a statement its not just a reflection of crass self-interest, you have some credibility because you’ve helped with other issues and you are someone who is helping make a difference. Decisions will need to be made about the future of health care, if we want to influence those decisions, we need to be at the tables where they’re being made.” We asked Dr. Crosby if the same is true for community involvement and leadership, “In Ontario, we have terrific examples of people who are community physicians, the Mike Sullivan’s, the John Oyston’s, the Steve Brown’s, who have all worked at a system level to change things...There is no real difference in terms of their being in community settings with regard to the influence that they have had. For all of them, there is clearly a motivation to change things for the better and they have had a terrific impact over the years.”

Dr. Crosby is not sure what the future holds for him from a leadership perspective, but he looks forward to being involved in more leadership roles as well as in teaching and training projects. He has lectured widely and published extensively including >100 papers in peer reviewed journals and >25 book chapters. His recent research, publication and presentation interests have included using evidence to derive strategies for safe airway management, defining strategies to reduce harm in anesthesia care, and the interaction of medicine with the law. We appreciate Dr. Crosby’s contribution to physician learning and patient outcomes and look forward to sharing more of his success in the years to come.