

Meet Your New Executive Committee Chair

Dr. Monica Olsen

BScPT, MD, FRCPC; Trillium Health Partners, Mississauga Hospital



In February, Dr. Monica Olsen took the helm of the Executive Committee. Below, we help you get to know her and two other new Executive members. To see who else is on the Executive, please [head over here](#).

What drew you to anesthesiology?

I really enjoyed physiology in medical school, and coincidentally did a short elective in second year medical school in anesthesia. The anesthesiologist I worked with explained the significant physiology, pharmacology and physics in anesthesia, which was really the start of my interest. Once I began to appreciate the critical care element of anesthesia, and that I would not have to manage an office, I was hooked.

When and why did you decide to join the Executive Committee?

I moved from Edmonton to Owen Sound in 2009 and spent several years "acclimatizing" to independent practice before I noticed the Section. Previously I'd always tried to participate in committee work or other representative roles available to me. Though I'd always known and been very impressed with the annual Ontario Anesthesia Meeting, I knew little else about the Section before I worked with a resident who served on the Executive. Once I heard about Beyond the Mask and spoke with Paul Tenenbein, I wanted to get involved so in 2014 I joined as a member-at-large.

And what made you decide to become the Chair?

Two things: One, because I was asked to consider it by someone I respected. And, because I couldn't come up with an answer to the question "Why not?" Both were important factors.

Do you have any goals that you want to accomplish while Chair?

I'd like to contribute to a successful conclusion of the Beyond the Mask 2020 initiative through the three remaining projects. I'd like to see an increased number of women get involved in physician leadership, particularly, but not only, in the Executive. I also aim to participate in some of the difficult, (but necessary) work in moving the profession forward in a positive way: Towards a contract, and an improved representation model and maybe, even move the needle on the awareness and recognition of the special role, and value, anesthesiologists provide to the health care system.

Any advice for Section members who are considering involvement with leadership roles?

Just say yes. Then work at becoming informed and articulate about the system, stakeholders and challenges. Form alliances with other docs and anesthesiologists so that you can learn from them too.

Share a couple of fun facts about yourself.

I am a huge fan of cross-country skiing so love the cold and snow. I also have an identical twin sister so it's possible you'll never truly know who's at the helm of the section.

Meet Your Newest Member-at-Large: Dr. Saroo Sharda

MRChR, MMed, FRCPC; Oakville Trafalgar Memorial Hospital

Why did you decide to become active on the Executive Committee?

I truly believe that as anesthesiologists, we need a strong and unified voice. My previous research work uncovered that there are many misperceptions held by non-anesthesiologists about the role of the anesthesiologist, and also that we as a profession may unwittingly perpetuate that cycle by staying silent and invisible despite doing pivotal work. The OA is doing great work in removing those misperceptions and I believe that by being more vocal as a profession, we can improve Inter-professional team working and thus patient care.

What do you hope to achieve while on the Executive Committee?

I want to form more collaboration across specialities and bring the idea that we can be proactive about collaboration and generous with information about our profession. I also want to give members like me—a woman of colour—who may have previously felt somewhat disconnected from the profession, a voice. We need more diverse perspectives at every level if we are going to truly represent our Membership.

Any advice for those considering leadership positions?

Remember that as an anesthesiologist you are already a leader. We are looked to in emergencies as leaders and are often the ones to manage conflict in complex and chaotic situations. I would especially encourage women to claim their place at the table in terms of leadership. The unique challenges faced by women in anesthesiology need to be represented and that can only happen by women getting involved.

Share a fun fact about yourself.

I am a writer! I work part-time as a workshop facilitator with Firefly Creative Writing and I'm currently working on my first novel!

Meet Your New Secretary: Dr. Arjun Krishna

MD, FRCPC, MSc; Oakville Trafalgar Memorial Hospital

What drew you to anesthesiology as a specialty?

I enjoy its dynamic nature. We can provide a therapy or intervention and see immediate results. We tend to be involved in acute emergencies, which can often be exhilarating. I also value the team aspect, as we work together with a wide variety of surgeons and other healthcare professionals.

Why is it important that anesthesiologists become leaders not just in their speciality but also in the broader healthcare field?

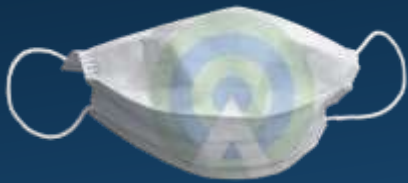
Our specialty is involved in a wide variety of services across the hospital, adding up to a substantial component of the healthcare system. As such, we can offer perspective and expertise in how to find efficiencies and ensure quality. It is important that we are involved in leadership if we want to have a voice and help evolve the system.

Any advice for those considering leadership positions?

I believe a good leader emulates the characteristics of a good role model. If you are to pick the strongest characteristics of all your role models, you will have a lot of potential as a good leader. For me this trick has worked, or at least it's a work in progress!

Share a fun fact about yourself.

Our family loves to snowboard in the winter, surf in the summer (although not well) and travel in all seasons!



PERI-OPERATIVE LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

Developing Peri-Operative Leaders: Knowledgeable, Collaborative, Effective

**BEYOND THE MASK INVITES YOU TO OUR
UPCOMING LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT DAY:**

ANESTHESIOLOGISTS AS CHANGE LEADERS: IN THE OR AND BEYOND

These are volatile, complex and uncertain times for Ontario’s healthcare system. To be successful in this ever-evolving environment, it is crucial that our members have the knowledge and confidence to implement changes in an efficient and effective manner. The ability to design the change initiative, build trust and alignment among stakeholders, create a team of change agents and learn from failure are just a few of the key attributes of a strong change leader.

Anesthesiologists as Change Leaders — designed for Ontario’s anesthesiologists by Ontario’s anesthesiologists — will provide participants with the opportunity to learn and practice new skills. The first half of the day will lay out the foundations of change leadership and use real life, from-the-OR (and beyond) case studies to illustrate the challenges that change leaders face.

During the second half of the day, participants will apply the morning’s lessons to developing an implementation plan for a workplace-related individual quality improvement or change initiative of their choice. This “personal project” will then be presented and reviewed in a small group setting. Each group will include an experienced change leader who will provide one-on-one coaching.

Among our confirmed faculty is Dr. Tania Di Renna, the Medical Director for the Toronto Academic Pain Medicine Institute. She will share with us how she brought together five separate pain clinics to transform the way chronic pain is handled in Canada’s largest city. For more details on Tania, please read her profile on page three and four of this newsletter.

Join us to elevate your leadership potential and acquire the skills to address real-world leadership challenges in the OR and beyond.

THIS DAY IS RIGHT FOR YOU IF...

- You are a Royal College or Family Physician Anesthesiologist who is interested in taking on leadership roles
- You have been or are likely to be charged with leading a change in your Department such as a quality initiative, Choosing Wisely or the introduction of a new health records system
- You want to take on a position of influence for anesthesiologists locally, regionally, provincially or nationally.

Want to be involved with planning future leadership development days? Then join the Beyond the Mask Working Group. Volunteering with BTM is a fantastic way to build leadership skills, make new connections and contribute to raising the profile of the Section.
For more details, please [head here](#).

APPLY HERE

**Saturday, May 11, 2019
9:00am-4:00pm
Li Ka Shing Knowledge Institute
209 Victoria St
Toronto, M5B 1T8**

To create an optimal experience for our participants, space is limited. If you are interested in this exciting day, be sure to apply today!

COST

\$500 plus HST

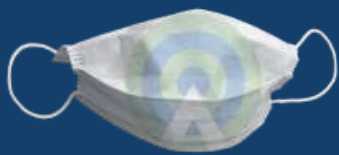
We are offering a travel stipend.
Please [click here](#) for further details

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Recognize the value of a change leadership strategy in the success of every change initiative
- Summarize the behaviours and expectations of a change leader
- Examine core elements of a change management or implementation model/framework and identify some of the execution challenges
- Apply a change leadership framework to real world scenarios through identification and critique of anesthesiology related change leadership initiatives
- Recommend an implementation approach and plan for an individual quality improvement or change initiative using a change leadership framework details

FEEDBACK FROM PAST LEADERSHIP DAYS

- “You guys have outdone yourself. Last year’s session was excellent. This time you hit it out of the park!”
- “Great level of group engagement. Likely because of relevance of topic, people could relate”
- “Will tell my friends to attend again”
- “Exceeded expectations”
- “Really exciting day!”



Beyond the Mask Profile



Dr. Tania Di Renna

Dr. Tania Di Renna is the first-ever Medical Director of the Toronto Academic Pain Medicine Institute. Launched in 2017, TAPMI is focused on chronic pain and is a natural fit for Tania, whose passion for treating chronic pain evolved out of her desire for a longitudinal relationship with patients. The former Medical Director at The Ottawa Hospital Pain Clinic, Tania is also active as a staff anesthesiologist at several downtown Toronto hospitals, where her goal is to prevent patients from ever having to turn to TAPMI. “Anesthesiology is that exciting specialty that allows you to make change,” says Tania, “Fifty per cent of surgeries can lead to a chronic pain condition and so here you are with the opportunity to prevent that.”

Dr. Jane Cooke-Lauder, the Section’s strategic consultant, and Lindsay Kneteman, the Section’s Coordinator, recently spoke with Tania to learn about her leadership story and its three defining refrains: *Dream big and don’t be afraid of failure; Take action yourself and enable agency in others; and, Teamwork matters!*

Dream big and don’t be afraid of failure

When Tania was asked about her goals for TAPMI, she jokingly says, “world domination” but her straight answer isn’t far off. In late 2016, when she first started, the objective was clear: bring together downtown Toronto’s five major pain clinics into one entity that would deliver better and quicker service to more patients. She started the process by mapping the patient’s experience, aiming to minimize as many barriers to timely care as possible. “We had to think outside the box,” she recalls. Changes included streamlining the triage pathway, developing active waiting strategies for waitlisted patients, and even delivering some services in a group setting. The result has been nothing short of a transformation in terms of how chronic pain is treated in Toronto and the 4,000 patients who are referred each year to TAPMI. Next stop: “influence the treatment of chronic pain across the world.”

To Tania, the privilege of leadership is that it allows you to be innovative, “not just in the clinical space but also in health delivery.” However, success does not come without risk taking and with risk, there is always the chance of failure. In Tania’s mind, your attitude in the face of failure really defines who you are. She notes that great leaders learn from failure and keep it in perspective so that they can dream big and innovate relentlessly.

She recalls a day some years ago, shortly after returning to work following her first maternity leave. The OR was in chaos following two code blues in a row and Tania found herself feeling out of control, “I remember yelling at a poor medical student because I thought he was an anesthesiologist assistant.” Suddenly she realized was she was doing, “I remember not liking who I was and deciding there and then to make a change.”

So she did. With the help of a book about cognitive behavioral therapy for emotional regulation, she began teaching herself techniques to control her emotions and be mindful. “Now when there’s a crisis in the OR, I just take a deep breath, slow down my heartbeat and speak clearly and calmly.” Today, she often gets feedback that she is the calmest person in the room. To Tania, taking control of her own behavior in a critical situation has been life changing. She finds herself showing up in all sorts of difficult situations with more confidence and capacity.

Take action and enable others

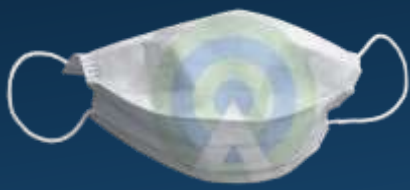
“I’ve never stood by and let other people do things for me,” she says. She traces her strong leadership skills and drive for action to growing up in an immigrant household in a working-class part of Toronto. She thanks her parents for instilling a strong work ethic in her, noting, “My parents always taught us, ‘Work is not a luxury, it’s an opportunity’.”

Being ready and able to act from a physical and mental health standpoint is the responsibility of each and every physician, although Tania acknowledges that this can be easier said than done, especially when it comes to mental health. She notes that there has been a lot of focus lately on external ways of self-care, “We really don’t take the opportunity to work on our inner selves.” Tania is trying to change that by recommending CBT to her colleagues and residents.

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Beyond taking action herself, over the years, Tania has realized the power of individual agency: each person having the capability and a sufficient sense of self-efficacy to act independently and make choices. She believes that one of the most powerful methods for preventing and treating pain is enabling patients to understand what is needed and how they can best help themselves. She describes words as an intervention that are just as valid as the prescription pad and one that physicians, including anesthesiologists, should be using more often. “People don’t know what to do with their pain post-op so tell them what to do,” says Tania. “You need to change people’s mindsets from ‘how do I remove this pain’ to ‘how do I live with it’ and the only way to do that is through education.”



She has a similar view with respect to expanding the capacity of the system: build physician confidence to extend their scope of practice. Tania also runs a mobile clinic where she teaches primary care doctors to feel comfortable treating some chronic pain patients in their own clinic. Explains Tania, “Education can empower physicians and increase capacity so that we can do something different about all of our wait lists.”

Teamwork matters

Typical of Tania, when talking about her work and in this case, TAPMI, she is quick to point out the role played by others: “There’s nothing I’ve ever achieved in this academic pain program by myself; this is a collaboration.” Given her driving passion to be of service, she enrolls supporters to contribute to the mission of helping others. This has meant developing the ability to flex her style and approach. When working with admin counterparts, she explains the different realities of the parties that can get in the way of a productive relationship: “Physicians tend to come out and ask for unicorns,” she says referring to doctors’ predisposition to dream big and to want the best for their patients. “We don’t understand that our administrators are dealing with limited funds and have to act at times like squirrels, hoarding their funding in case of unexpected demands or further shortages.”

Says Tania, “My leadership strategy is to be understanding of people’s perspectives, be flexible and be collaborative so that we can all reach the shared goal.”

Building strong, authentic relationships with her colleagues is also important, particularly when leading change. In the case of TAPMI, “I really had to sit down and listen to what everyone was worried about,” she says. Any call to action must take into account shared values. For physicians, this often entails helping people. Again, in the case of TAPMI, “The fundamental selling point was that the patients would do better if we all came together and worked together,” she explains. The results achieved speak volumes as to how well these approaches can work.

Tania practices these same values at home where her husband, a successful plastic and reconstructive surgeon, shares household and childcare duties. “He understands that my success as a leader is also his success as a physician,” says Tania who notes that success in a leadership role is much more difficult without the support of loved ones.

In wrapping up, Tania returns to the importance of working as a team. She sees the anesthesiology specialty as being better equipped than others to lead system change. She recognizes that not every anesthesiologist will seize the opportunity to take on a leadership role and that leadership is not for everyone. And that is why teamwork is so important. “There’s beauty and incredible value in those colleagues who perform the clinical work that allows leaders to go to meetings and teach and do other daytime work,” Tania explains, “We all have a part to play.”

BTM Working Group Member Spotlight



Dr. Chris Harle

Dr. Chris Harle has been volunteering with Beyond the Mask since it launched in 2015. “I firmly believe that we need to define our own identity and to promote our essential specialty,” says Chris, “BTM is designed to do exactly that —facilitate the opportunities to lead as well as to confer some accountability on us.”

As an international medical graduate having trained in South Africa, England and the USA, Chris now works as a consultant anesthesiologist at London Health Sciences Centre, where he specialized in cardiac anesthesiology. He is also an Associate Professor at Western University.

After helping to bring the successful Choosing Wisely Campaign to life, Chris is now playing a key role in BTM’s new Pain Management Project, which aims in Phase One, to reduce the number of unnecessary opioid prescriptions.

Noting that anesthesiologists are the experts on opioids, he explains that it is imperative that the Section be part of the dialog around the opioid crisis, “We need to be seen as positive contributors, change agents and collaborators in a multi-jurisdictional, multi-faceted and multi-disciplinary phenomenon.” Chris believes that the Pain Management Project will result in better patient care and responsible prescribing as well as serve as a platform for future collaborative leadership initiatives, both around the opioid crisis and other healthcare issues.

Chris also sits on the BTM Steering Committee, where he serves as a crucial link between BTM and the Executive Committee, which he has been a part of since 2014.This past January, Chris completed his term as Chair. Known for deftly finding the right balance between leading from the front while also listening and collaborating with others, Chris will remain with the Executive as the Past-Chair, with the mandate to continue to work on increasing the Section’s presence with Stakeholders. We thank Chris for all of his hard work with both BTM and the Executive.

Says Chris, “Our specialty is uniquely positioned at the interface of so many facets of healthcare; clinically, politically and administratively. This confers on us both the opportunity and the responsibility to lead.”