

Transcript Details

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Canadian Perspective: Drs. Bhatia, Sapijaszko, and Kaufmann

Neal Bhatia:

Hi, I'm Dr. Neal Bhatia, chief medical editor of practical dermatology. Two of my oldest friends in the business, Dr. Mariusz Sapijaszko from Edmonton, Alberta.

Mariusz Sapijaszko:

Hello.

Neal Bhatia:

Dr. Mark Kaufmann from any state he chooses to be in. We're going to talk a little bit about advocacy in dermatology, the Canadian version, as well as the American version. We're going to talk a little bit about how Canadian dermatologists compare their advocacy arm and the efforts like we do in the US with Capitol Hill. So Mariusz, you're heavily involved with CDA, with a lot of education in derms in Canada. What do Canadian derms do together to go talk to the lobbyists in Ottawa or wherever else, or even in your own province?

Mariusz Sapijaszko:

Well, provincially, what we're trying to do is really get patients involved. Nothing is more persuasive really for the payers like patient stories. So we have patient success stories, and from the Canadian Dermatology Association, we try to, both federally and provincially, really show the burden on skin disease and the wonderful medications that are currently available. And at first they may be a little more expensive, but at the same time, they provide really significant relief in quality of life and improvement of their disease.

Neal Bhatia:

And how much support do you get from industry, for example? Is there any help or any voice from them?

Mariusz Sapijaszko:

Well, industry is helpful from our point of view because they have a great patients programs or patients access programs. And by doing that, it really takes the burden off our hands and allows the patients to be really looked after by one-on-one coordination with each industry.

Neal Bhatia:

Yeah. So how does that compare with our efforts here?

Mark Kaufmann:

Yeah, I think I'm moving to Canada. But it's similar. I mean, I totally agree with Mariusz that patient stories are definitely the way to go. Most of our legislators, they don't want to see doctors; they want to hear from their constituents, even though we are as well, but they want to hear from patients. And so having patient advocates is always helpful, and we're trying to actually do that now with all the problems we have with the physician fee schedule in the United States, we're trying to engage our patients to be advocates for us as well, and to understand that if the physician fee schedule doesn't get changed, that their access to adequate medical care is going to be affected.

Neal Bhatia:

So how does that translate to what we can all do through the academy or some other way to collaborate? What other efforts should we pooling together?

Mariusz Sapijaszko:

Well, I think when you talk about patient-specific diseases, really talk about patient-specific groups because I think there's a different way than hidradenitis suppurativa patients can advocate, atopic dermatitis patients can advocate, vitiligo patients can advocate, and psoriasis patients can advocate. I think some of them are more visible diseases, and I think that whenever we're talking one-on-one with anybody who makes a decision, seeing these patients with their conditions present, it really makes a very impactful difference.

Neal Bhatia:

Yeah. So just switching gears, we have a lot of meetings in America, we see a lot of Canadian derms come to the American meetings. Why aren't enough Americans going to Canadian meetings?

Mariusz Sapijaszko:

Well, I think ... Sorry, Mark, go ahead.

Neal Bhatia:

Maybe you want to take this one.

Mark Kaufmann:

You go ahead first. You go first.

Mariusz Sapijaszko:

Well, pretty soon you may not have to have passport.

Neal Bhatia:

There you go.

Mariusz Sapijaszko:

So hopefully that will increase the attendance of American physicians, American dermatologists, and our Canadian Dermatology Association meetings and other meetings. But there are great opportunities in coast to coast, so all Americans are always invited.

Mark Kaufmann:

And you won't need a passport because you're going to be the 51st state, or?

Mariusz Sapijaszko:

Apparently, that's the latest rumor.

Neal Bhatia:

It'll be the fourth term president, so yeah.

Mariusz Sapijaszko:

That's the latest rumor.

Mark Kaufmann:

Yeah. So what's this all about, the presidency in Canada? Is everyone president multiple times?

Mariusz Sapijaszko:

Well, it was a unique situation, and I'm very happy that I was given an opportunity to be involved in CDA leadership.

Neal Bhatia:

But the take home is don't fly to Edmonton because you'll get stopped.

Mariusz Sapijaszko:

Well, it's a unique place.

Neal Bhatia:

It's a unique place, exactly. Mariusz, Mark, this was very good knowledge to take back to our viewers and thank everyone to watch us, and we'll see you next time.