

2008 Medical Students Forum

Thank You!

Once again the feedback from this year's Medical Students Forum was excellent! Your generosity enabled over 60 medical students and residents from across Canada to attend two days of pro-life seminars, workshops, and panel discussions.

Informal conversations were just as enriching as the time spent in sessions. Students from different medical schools and the experienced physicians and presenters exchanged ideas and experiences in impromptu talks held over meals, in hallways, and in the lingering discussions that took place after each session.



"The conference was excellent....I found the sessions really useful to provide me with a backbone as I start my career in medicine and holding pro-life views in what increasingly seems to be pro-choice world. The conference gave a lot of food for thought and really evoked important discussions on ethics and how to uphold morals and faith in a secular world. I also gained more insight into the issues surrounding abortion and was able to have important discussions with fellow classmates who were pro-choice around this issue when I came back on Monday from the conference."

(University of Ottawa medical student, Class of 2012)



Dr. Paul Ranalli, Lecturer in Neurology at the University of Toronto, presented his lecture, "A Medical Detective Story: What you felt before you were born" —current anatomical and physiological evidence that the fetus is capable of feeling pain by at least 20 weeks gestation. Slides from Dr. Ranalli's presentation are available on the CPL website: www.physiciansforlife.ca



Dr. Will Johnston, Family physician and President of Canadian Physicians for Life, and **Dr. Delores Doherty**, Family physician and Board member of Canadian Physicians for Life were Masters of Ceremonies.

Dr. Johnston opened the forum with a talk on the Health Risks of Abortion.

Stephanie Gray, executive director of the Canadian Centre for Bio-Ethical Reform, gave students practical tools for discussing abortion and framing the debate in her lecture, "The Abortion Debate: Equipped to Engage."



Communications specialist, **Michael Langlois**, outlined the importance of selecting the right language for credibly addressing life issues. He offered tips and techniques for building confidence in conversations with colleagues, patients, critics and the media.



"Thank you so much for the opportunity to go to the conference this year, it was a truly incredible experience, and I learned so much, and was able to engage certain issues that we would not get in the classroom!"
(University of Alberta medical student, Class of 2012)

Ancaster, Ontario, Nov. 22 - Nov. 23, 2008

"I had a wonderful time getting to know students from across Canada and from my own school. I am encouraged that I have colleagues who share my beliefs and that I now know I can rely on should ethical issues in my education arise."

(University of Alberta medical student, Class of 2012)



Dr. Stephen Genuis, Associate Clinical Professor, Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, University of Alberta, discussed the evidence demonstrating that many youth are having their lives compromised physically, emotionally, and socially because of the significant impact of unintended teen pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections.



Genevieve Lanigan

shared the very moving and personal story of her family's journey with her infant son Joseph's life from conception to natural death. She detailed their experience with medical personnel before, during, and after discovering the child in her womb was developing with severe abnormalities.



"...want to thank the sponsors who year after year make it possible for us students to attend such an important forum. My warmest thanks also to all speakers...they really demonstrate their passion for life."

(University of British Columbia medical student, Class of 2011)

Sharing her own personal experience and using professional anecdotes, Ottawa physician psychotherapist, **Dr. Lise Poirier-Groulx** discussed prenatal genetic screening, the implications of freedom of conscience for physicians, and the implications of both positive and negative results and the stress on the pregnant woman.

(photo courtesy of Dr. Poirier-Groulx)



Dr. Larry Reynolds, former head of Family Medicine at University of Manitoba, held an interactive workshop to help students learn how to engage patients in respectful

conversations about abortion; students role-played doctors and patients in real life patient situations.



Isabelle Bégin, researcher and National Secretary of Respect for Life - Education Movement/Respect de la Vie - Mouvement d'Éducation, put abortion morbidity and mortality statistics in perspective in a DVD presentation explaining the findings of her extensive research.

Dr. John Patrick, in his lecture on the cultural consequences of legalising abortion, explored the radically different outcomes of opposing rational, coherent, and ethical paradigms, and the moral foundation of the pro-life position.

A special thanks to Dr. Robert Pankratz for the use of his photos from the 2008 Medical Students Forum



Lawyer **Phil Hogan**, president of the Catholic Civil Rights League, and **Sean**

Murphy, administrator of the Protection of Conscience Project, offered a legal perspective on current developments related to freedom of conscience issues. Students benefitted from Mr. Hogan's participation in the open forum Q&A panel discussion that wrapped up the weekend.

