

2023 ANNUAL REPORT

CPL Annual Conference • October 2023

At the 2023 Conference, our theme was “I Want You To Be: Celebrating Life, Encouraging Hope.” Our annual conference was held both in person and online. A total of 140 participants convened, including 28 sponsored medical students and residents who took advantage of networking and learning opportunities with our invited speakers. This conference has a significant impact on the way attendees can defend their pro-life beliefs. The conference included Dr. Xavier Symons speaking on “Conscience and the Courage to Accept the Human Condition” and Dr. Kristin Collier on “The Art of Medicine: Exploring Bioethics through Beauty.”

We also heard from Dr. Aasim Padela on “Engaging Muslim Perspective on Life-Affirming Medicine” and Dr. Quentin Genuis on “What’s the Right Response to the Opioid Crisis in Canada?”

At our 2021 annual conference, we inaugurated the Dr. Paul Adams Award. In creating this award, we seek to honour a life well lived in noble service that left an exemplary legacy. The purpose of this award is to acknowledge and celebrate someone who demonstrates exceptional initiative, professionalism, and generosity within the pro-life medical community. The 2023 winner of this award was Dr. Stephen Genuis.



Mentoring Programs

The mentoring programs are open both to medical students and residents. We continue our collaboration with Dr. Kevin Majeres of Harvard Medical School and his team at OptimalWork to enhance our mentoring programs. We have integrated the OptimalWork platform into our program. We have 39 medical students and residents in our mentoring program. We are also expanding our mentoring programs to nurses and midwives. We kicked off our nursing program in Spring 2023 with a book study on Charles Camosy and Alisha Mack’s book *Bioethics for Nurses*. We have five nursing students in our mentoring program, four of whom sought mentors and were promptly matched to a nurse mentor. The midwifery mentoring program had its soft launch this past Fall 2023, with six students enrolled in the midwifery student course and 20 mentors enrolled in the midwife mentor course on CPL’s Learning Platform. Matches are ongoing and made as needed.

In addition, we have also grown our pre-med program. Our pre-med program expanded beyond the application phase to mentoring students once they arrive at their application cycle to medical school. This year we have 117 students at all stages of undergrad in our pre-med mentoring program. Twenty-four of them were approaching or in their application cycle and were successfully matched with a medical student or resident mentor to help them in that process.



Bioethics Symposium on Mental Health

In June 2023, we convened 16 of Canada’s most promising medical students and healthcare professionals for our first Bioethics Symposium on Mental Health. The participants also included two journalists. The theme was “And So My Life Was Good”, which is derived from a quotation from St. Josephine Bakhita who had been kidnapped, beaten, and sold into slavery in Sudan. Despite her sufferings and torments, she was able to say: “I am definitively loved and whatever happens to me —I am awaited by this Love. And so my life is good.”

We see it as the task of medical professionals to elicit this affirmation that, in spite of suffering, each patient can see the goodness of his or her own life. Our symposium included assigned interdisciplinary readings to form participants in the intellectual tradition related to life-affirming mental healthcare. The aim of this humanistic study over an intentionally convivial weekend is to enhance participants’ moral impact in both personal and professional life.

“This symposium was phenomenal. Nothing like it exists in Canada. I felt incredibly privileged to be invited to take part.”

JONATHON VAN MAREN



Learning Platform

Our Learning Platform hosts the conference programs and CPL resources. Resources are grouped into learning packages. In the summer of 2021, we launched the following courses: Abortion 101, Abortion 102, Euthanasia 101 and Euthanasia 102, Ethics: Eugenics & Sterilization, Ethics: Referral and Conscience & Healthcare.

As of this printing, we have 887 users totaling 6,222 enrollments on our Learning Platform. We also facilitated an online Book Group discussing Charles Camosy and Alisha Mack’s book *Bioethics for Nurses* as well as webinars throughout the year with Dr. Julia Palmieri and Dr. Christopher Lisanti.



Case Consult

In August 2023 we launched our Case Consult Service. This service is a resource for healthcare professionals who would like help addressing an ethical question or problem related to a patient’s care. We have five physicians and one nurse who are available for consultation.



Crisis Line

The Crisis Line is available for medical students, residents, and physicians who find themselves pressured to violate their conscience. When someone contacts our crisis line, we do an initial assessment. Sometimes the issue can be resolved but if not, they are put in contact with a constitutional lawyer. The connection happens within 24 hours of initial contact with CPL.



Abortion Pill Rescue

We continue our partnership with the Abortion Pill Rescue Network. We encourage physician involvement with the network and are providing more resources on our Learning Platform to support this important initiative. We are working on expanding the network of physicians involved in this project.



Legal, Political, and Cultural Outreach

We are continuing our efforts to build a network of like-minded organizations and individuals across professional disciplines to help us move the legislative needle on life issues. CPL is focused on building a coalition of defenders of freedom of conscience with organizations and individuals from a variety of backgrounds. This ‘big tent’ approach will help to achieve legislative successes.

In **January 2023**, Nicole Scheidl represented CPL at the launch of the Hippocratic Alliance in Washington, D.C.

In **March 2023**, we contributed to getting the expansion of euthanasia to mental illness paused for one year. Now, our intention is, of course, to make the pause permanent.

In **April 2023**, we submitted a co-authored brief with the Alliance Defending Freedom to the 44th Session of the Human Rights Council’s Universal Periodic Review Working Group.

In **October 2023**, we hosted a Conscience Symposium for physicians, lawyers, and those engaged in public policy. Dr. Xavier Symons addressed this group.

