



AHPA

ARTHRITIS HEALTH PROFESSIONS ASSOCIATION

ANNUAL
REPORT
2025





TABLE OF CONTENTS

Board of Directors: 2

Mission and Vision: 3

President's Report: 4

2023-2028 Strategic Plan: 7

Strategic Progress and Priorities: 8

Chair and Committee Reports: 11

SIG Report: 17

Liaison Reports: 19

Financial Overview: 21

Sponsor Support: 22



2025 Board of Directors

President: Michelle Bridge
Past-President: Samantha Holmgren
President-Elect: Julia Brooks (Oct-Dec)
Treasurer: Mary Ellen Marcon
Secretary: Claire Jacek
Communications Chair: Sue MacQueen
Member-at-Large: Ahava Lipetz
Membership Chair: Karen Gordon
Professional and Career Development Chair: Vacant
Research Chair: Dr. Karine Toupin-April
Sponsorship and Marketing Chair: Tom Young

Other

ACPAC SIG Chair: Julie Herrington / Michael Denton
CRA Transition Liaison: Julie Herrington
ORA Liaison: Osk Jenkins
CRA Human Resources Liaison: Jennifer Burt

Webmaster/Administrative Support: Ron Yong

www.ahpa.ca
connect@ahpa.ca

ARTHRITIS HEALTH PROFESSIONS ASSOCIATION

We are a Canadian not-for-profit organization made up of healthcare professionals, students, trainees, researchers, and administrators dedicated to improving the care of individuals living with rheumatic and musculoskeletal diseases.

VISION AND MISSION

Vision

Optimal care and quality of life for every Canadian living with arthritis.

Mission

To build and sustain a community of professionals who provide the best possible care to Canadians with arthritis through knowledge translation, engagement, and inter-professional collaboration.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES 2023 - 2028

Knowledge Translation

To generate, share, and disseminate the evolving body of arthritis care knowledge by creating opportunities for research funding, collaboration, and education for our members.

Engagement

To maximize the engagement of our members and external partners, leveraging our positive impact on individual professionals and the healthcare system, and better positioning AHPA to fulfill its mission.

Sustainability

To build the resources, organizational structures, and capacity, to achieve our goals and provide excellent value to our members.





PRESIDENT'S REPORT

As **President** of AHPA, it is my privilege to present this year's report, reflecting on our achievements from January to December and looking ahead to the opportunities before us.

In 2025, we were pleased to have more Chair positions filled than in the previous year; however, we continued to operate without a fully complete Board, including the absence of a Professional and Career Development Chair, and a partial vacancy in the President-Elect role. Despite these gaps, the Board remained resilient and committed to advancing AHPA's mission. We successfully delivered our Pre-Course, hosted additional webinars, administered our research grant competition, and shared a range of external educational opportunities and resources through our newsletter.

Julia Brooks joined the Board as **President-Elect** in October, bringing strong leadership and an engaging presence following her participation in the Great Debate, where her contributions stood out. She led the KT portfolio, providing early direction and enthusiasm to strengthen AHPA's research and professional development initiatives. Although her tenure was shorter than anticipated due to personal reasons, we are sincerely grateful for her contributions and the energy she brought to the Board.

As President, I continued to oversee the Engagement Portfolio, focusing on strengthening member engagement and relationships with our professional and patient organization partners. A key focus remained **Arthritis Action Now: The Plan to End Arthritis in Canada** (formerly the Arthritis Action Plan). This engagement portfolio includes the Communications Chair, Website Committee, liaison roles, and the Member-at-Large, who played an important role in liaising with the ACPAC SIG. The President also oversees the Secretary and Treasurer roles, supporting organizational governance.

Samantha Holmgren, Past-President, led the Sustainability Portfolio, focused on strengthening internal processes and ensuring AHPA's long-term viability, including funding and membership growth. This portfolio includes the Membership Chair, Sponsorship and Marketing Chair, and oversight of the Nominations process. We are deeply appreciative of her leadership and dedication to AHPA.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



As a working board, we rely on the time and efforts of our volunteer Board of Directors. Their passion, experience, and insights enable us to continue supporting our community. We also recognize the invaluable contributions of our committee volunteers, liaisons, and all members and non-members who have supported AHPA. Their dedication is reflected in the following exceptional contributions.

Mary Ellen Marcon, Treasurer: For her perseverance and dedication to the financial stewardship of AHPA. Her efforts in coordinating the annual budget, monitoring expenses, ensuring accurate financial records, and overseeing the safe custody of funds are essential to the smooth operation of our association. Her diligent work and attention to detail contribute greatly to our continued success. We greatly appreciate her invaluable contributions to AHPA.

Claire Jacek, Secretary: For her loyal service and meticulous attention to detail. She fulfills an important role in recording and maintaining the minutes of our meetings and ensuring that approved minutes are promptly posted. Additionally, her efforts in ensuring that our annual corporation reporting obligations are met is essential to maintaining compliance. Her contributions are deeply valued, and we are grateful for her commitment to our smooth functioning.

Sue MacQueen, Communications Chair: For her devotion in keeping our members informed and engaged, through our website and the production of newsletters and newsflashes. She ensures AHPA members stay up-to-date on our strategic initiatives, upcoming internal and external events, networking opportunities, job postings, grants/awards, research advancements and recruitment, member spotlights, clinician and patient resources, and more! Beyond her communications role, her advisory talents and wealth of knowledge have been instrumental in guiding AHPA's initiatives and fostering collaboration. We are truly grateful for her expertise and commitment!

- **Website Committee:** Led by Sue MacQueen, the committee is responsible for regularly updating and reviewing the content on the website. We extend our gratitude to Anne MacLeod and Rashmi Mandhane for their valuable support.

Ahava Lipetz, Member-at-Large (Started April): For her participation as ACPAC SIG liaison and supporting the board with small tasks as needed.

Karen Gordon, Membership Chair: For her determination in the recruitment, retention, and recognition of AHPA members. Her efforts in overseeing the membership application process and co-organizing the Lifetime Achievement Award have been key in strengthening our community.





ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS CONTINUED



Karine Toupin-April, Research Chair: For her leadership in driving research initiatives within AHPA and upholding the KT pillar within our organization.

- **Research Committee:** Led by the Research Chair, the Research Committee coordinates the annual AHPA grant competition and peer reviews abstract submissions by the AHPA members to the CRA Annual Scientific Meeting. We also extend our gratitude to Paul Adam who lead the review committee for the AHPA grant applications, as well as to Susan Bartlett, Linda Li, Laura Passalent, Diane Tin, and Marie Westby for their valuable support. Additionally, we appreciate the external researchers who assisted in reviewing grants to ensure impartiality and address conflicts of interest when needed.

Tom Young, Sponsorship and Marketing Chair: For taking a thoughtful and steady approach to building relationships and establishing a strong foundation for the portfolio since stepping into the role in April, at the end of Petra Kodeda's term.

Cybersecurity Committee: We extend sincere thanks to Kristin Dillon and Phil Bertrand for their leadership and guidance in navigating cyber fraud incidents experienced by members, including phishing and impersonation attempts, and for their support in strengthening our cybersecurity practices.

Liaisons: In addition to our various committees, we also have AHPA members who raise our voice with other organizations as our AHPA Liaisons: Osk Jenkins with the Ontario Rheumatology Association, Julie Herrington with the CRA Transition Working Group, and Jennifer Burt with the CRA Human Resources Committee. Thank you for your continued commitment!

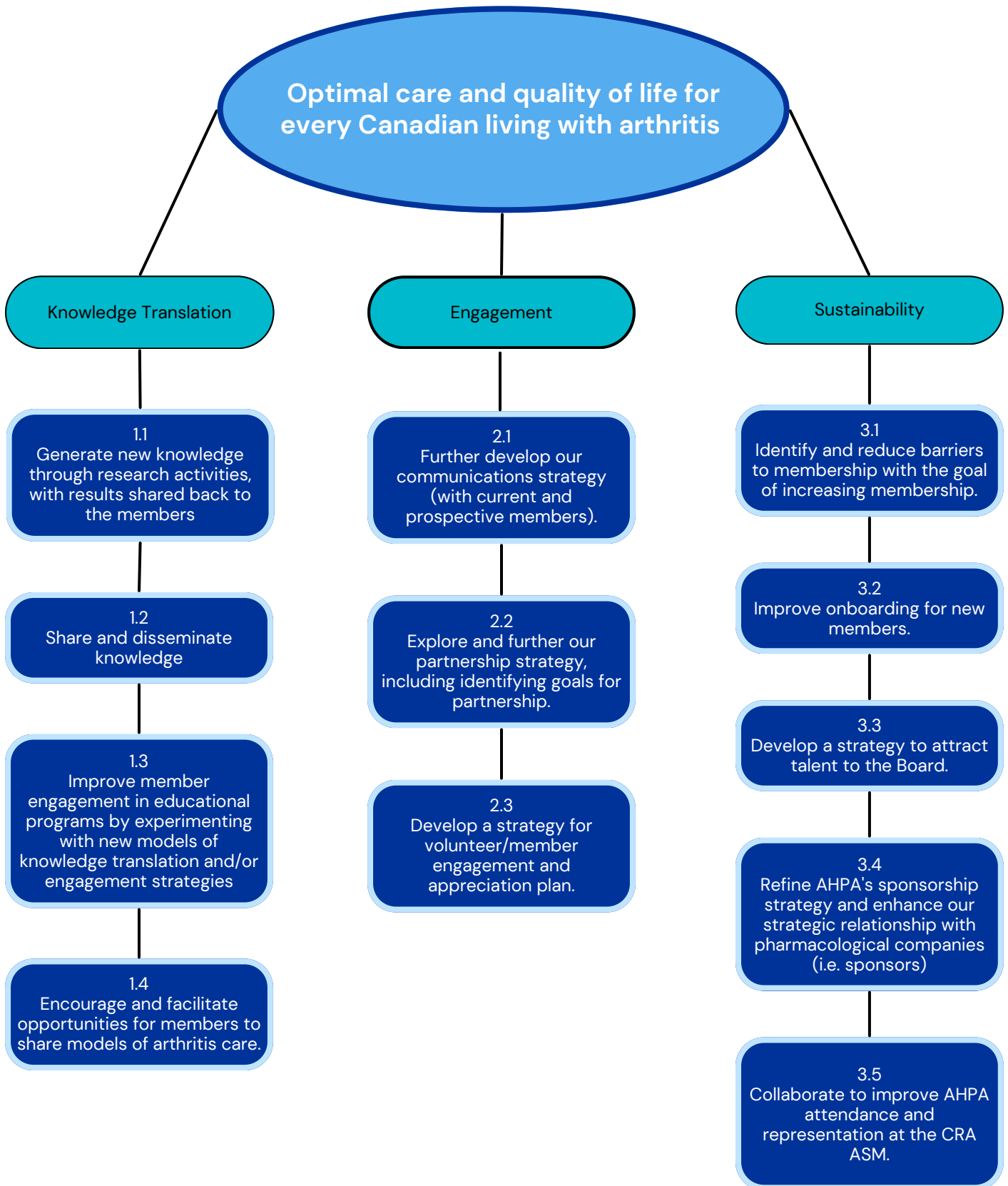
Ron Yong, Webmaster and Administrative Support: For all the hard work and dedication he brings to AHPA. His expertise, attention to detail, and commitment to keeping our systems running smoothly are invaluable to our organization.

In closing, I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to all Board members, committee chairs, and volunteers for their dedication, time, and expertise throughout the year. AHPA continues to thrive because of the commitment and collaboration of its members, even in the face of ongoing capacity challenges. A final thank you to our members, sponsors, and partners for your loyalty and commitment. Your involvement, generosity, and collaboration are essential to our success and continue to advance our mission and vision. It has been a privilege to serve as President during such a dynamic and productive year, and I look forward to seeing AHPA continue to evolve and build on its impact in the years ahead.

Respectfully Submitted,
Michelle Bridge, OT Reg. (Ont.), ACPAC
AHPA President



2023 - 2028 Strategic Plan



Strategic Progress and Priorities

Knowledge Translation

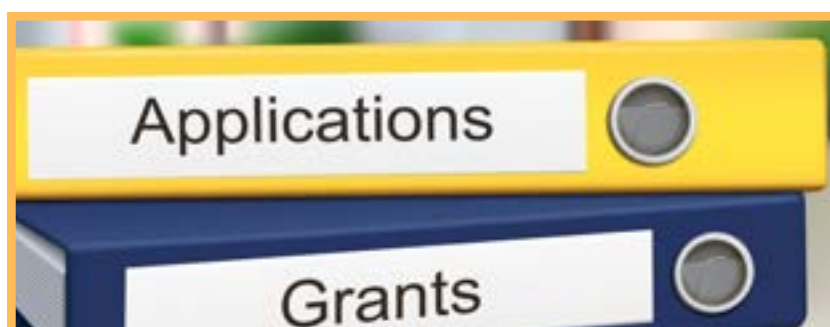
Progress in 2025

- The 17th annual Pre-Course was held in February, with 54 participants attending the Friday session.
- A new Post-Course was introduced in March, attended by 12 participants.
- Three additional networking and educational events were offered to members.
- External professional development opportunities were regularly shared through newsletters.
- A learning needs assessment was completed to inform future programming.
- One research grant and four abstract awards were reviewed and awarded.



Priorities in 2026

- Continue delivery of the Pre-Course, moved to March to align with new CRA ASM dates.
- Maintain AHPA representation on the CRA ASM Program Planning Committee.
- Recruit a Professional and Career Development Chair.
- Synthesize findings from the learning needs assessment to define key educational priorities for members.
- Continue to offer virtual and in-person educational and networking opportunities, along with research grants and awards.



Engagement

Progress in 2025

- Engaging Our Members
 - Regular Communication: Distributed newsletters to keep members informed of strategic initiatives, upcoming events, networking opportunities, job postings, grants and awards, research advancements, clinical guidelines, and quality standards. Communications also featured member spotlights, study recruitment opportunities, and curated patient and clinician resources.
 - Welcome Bags: Distributed curated swag bags to AHPA delegates at the CRA Annual Scientific Meeting; these were very well received.
 - Networking: Facilitated both in-person and virtual opportunities to strengthen connections and peer engagement across the AHPA community, including:
 - AHPA Social held in Calgary on February 26, 2025, during the CRA Annual Scientific Meeting.
 - Pre-event networking sessions offered ahead of select synchronous virtual events.
 - Java & Joints Virtual Networking Hour in recognition of Arthritis Awareness Month on September 24, 2025.
- Engaging our Partners
 - Maintained active engagement with patient, professional, and research partners through regular collaboration and information exchange.
 - Continued to support the Arthritis Action Plan by working alongside 21 Ecosystem Champion organizations to advance shared priorities in arthritis care. AHPA contributed to key discussions, ensuring the perspectives of arthritis health professionals were represented in shaping policies and initiatives aimed at improving patient outcomes.
 - Contributed to the CRA Annual Scientific Meeting through AHPA member participation on the Program Planning Committee, podium presentation, awards of distinction, workshop presentations and moderation, and the Great Debate.

Priorities in 2026

- Expand and diversify networking opportunities to enhance member engagement and accessibility.
- Increase AHPA's presence and visibility at the CRA Annual Scientific Meeting through enhanced member participation.
- Strengthen mechanisms to gather and integrate member feedback to inform programming and strategic priorities.
- Support the launch and ongoing advancement of the Arthritis Action Plan.



Sustainability

Summary

Our biggest sustainability challenges continue to be consistent funding and board capacity. We have particularly struggled to recruit executive committee members and the professional and career development chair. As continuing education is a significant member benefit, this is particularly concerning.

Progress in 2025

- Continued to refine onboarding of new board members.
- To improve our ability to locate material and for ease of onboarding, we have started reorganizing our file management and archiving information previously held on USB devices or paper files.

Priorities in 2026

- Continue improving onboarding for both board members and new AHPA members.
- Seek feedback on ways to improve recruitment of board members, particularly executive members.



Committee Reports

Communications: Sue MacQueen



Mandate

- Manage internal communications.
- Keep members informed of advances in rheumatology, AHPA activities, etc. through the production of a regular newsletter.
- Encourage other AHPA members and AHPA partners to write articles for the newsletter, review current books or literature, and note important upcoming dates of interest to the AHPA membership.
- Be responsible for maintaining and updating the AHPA website, in collaboration with the AHPA Webmaster.



Achievements in 2025

- Chaired the Website committee with ongoing updates to the website in collaboration with the Webmaster.
- Updated the yearly membership renewal form.
- Produced bi-weekly AHPA NEWS! communications.
- Worked with partner organizations to provide updates in the AHPA NEWS!



Priorities in 2026

- Continue to work with membership to disseminate information about AHPA to potential new members.
- Solicit articles of interest for the NEWS! from AHPA members.
- Continue to liaise with partner organizations to share pertinent information of interest to AHPA members.



Membership: Karen Gordon



Mandate

- Recruitment, retention and recognition of AHPA members;
- Development of programs for membership recruitment and retention;
- Oversee the membership process and applications;
- Ensure welcome emails sent to new members and thank-you emails sent to our members who recruit new members;
- Organize the Lifetime Achievement Award.



Achievements in 2025

- Dec 2025 membership numbers;143 AHPA members including 65 ACPAC SIG members. Membership numbers are slightly increased when compared with 2024 and have recovered following COVID pandemic.
- 2025 Earlybird AHPA membership renewal incentive \$100 gift card random draw winner was Angelo Papachristos. Trimadhu Sharma has won early bird 2026 AHPA membership registration random draw for \$100 gift card.
- 2025 Lifetime Achievement Award Recipient was Susan Bartlett. Award video was aired at the 2025 CRA ASM. Award Certificate was presented during the 2025 CRA ASM gala.



Priorities in 2026

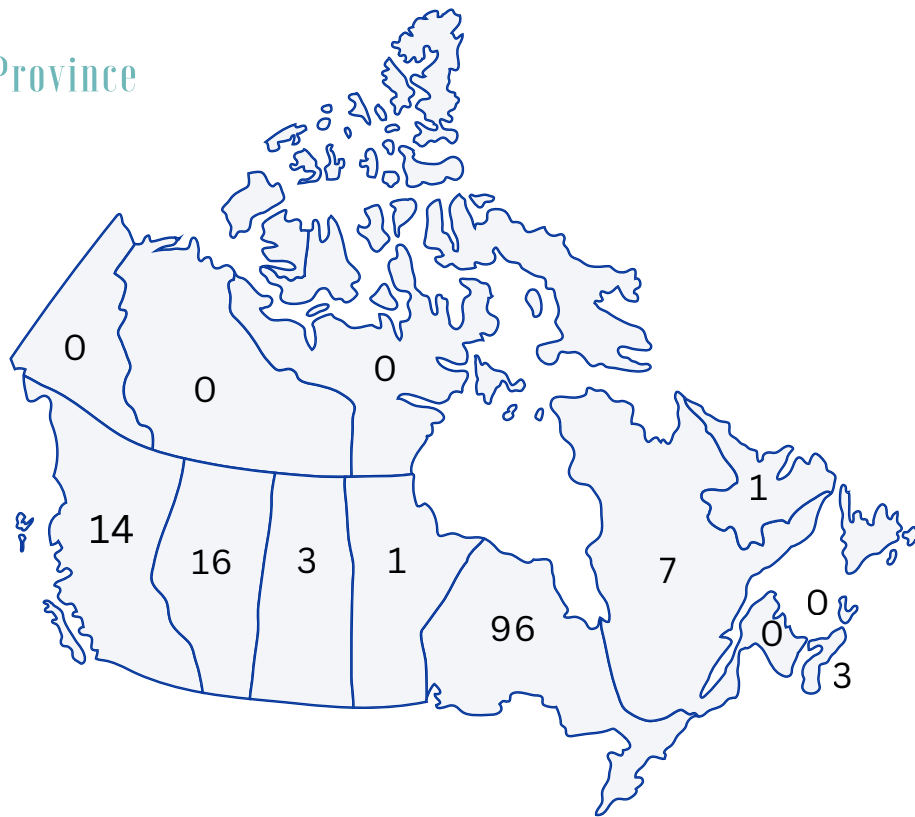
- Continue to build on AHPA membership recruitment and retention including student members. Promote membership in Maritime region to boost AHPA attendance at CRA ASM in Halifax in April 2026.
- Continue to monitor and improve registration process.
- Prepare and send out Perception of Value survey February 2026. Analyze and share member feedback at AHPA AGM. Consider updates and modifications based on member feedback.
- Continue to promote interest in Lifetime Achievement Award.



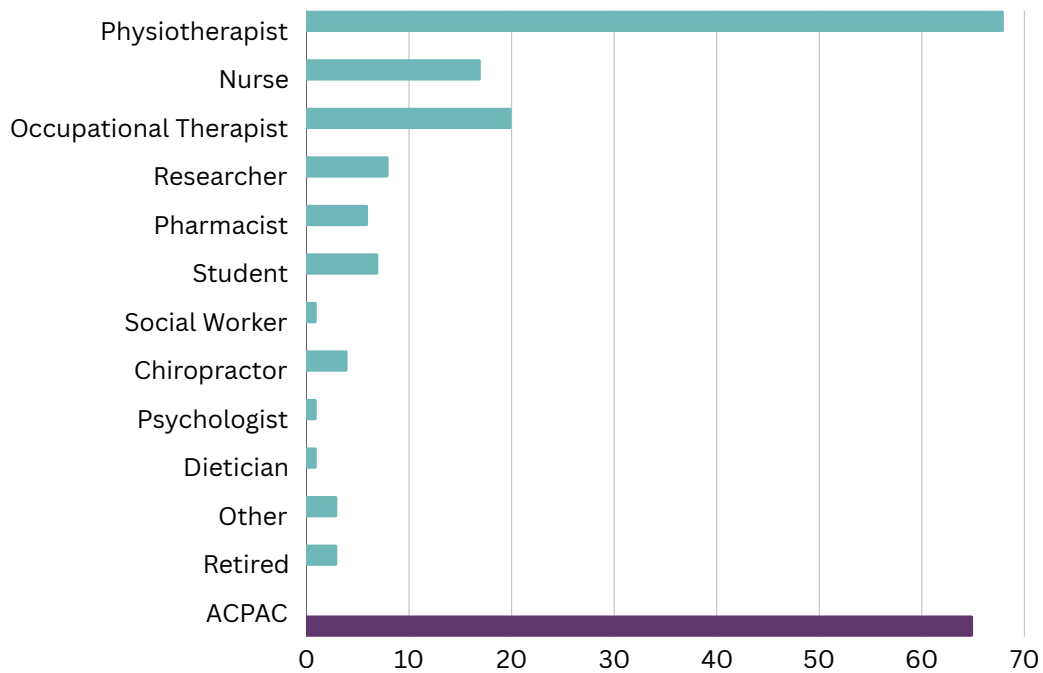
Membership 2025

141 Members

Membership by Province



Membership by Profession



ACPAC SIG members are also included in PT, OT, RN, and Chiro numbers.

Professional and Career Development: Vacant



Mandate

The Professional and Career Development Committee identifies and addresses the learning needs of the AHPA membership, as well as promoting and administering the Clinical Innovation Award.



Achievements in 2025

- The 2025 Pre-Course Committee lead by Chair, Mary Ellen Marcon, and members Sue MacQueen, Paul Adam, Lynn Richards, Michelle Bridge and Ron Yong (Admin Support), worked with enthusiasm for the 4th consecutive year to deliver a wonderful Pre-Course.
- The annual Pre-Course took place on Friday, February 7th. Fifty-four people attended the session this year.
- The Post Course took place on Saturday, March 22nd in which 12 people attended.
- We were able to send out a 2025 learning needs assessment this year and the results are being coalesced to allow us to offer the programming that interests our members.
- We were able to offer some other learning opportunities including Java and Joints as well as our Lupus talk this winter. There were also additional educational opportunities offered through our newsletter and a new section for highlighted Journal Articles reviewed by our very own Karen Gordon.
- We sadly did not receive any applications for the 2025 Clinical Innovation award. As per our updated procedure, an application from the previous year was awarded the 2025 award at the 2025 AHPA Annual General Meeting and Awards Ceremony on April 7, 2025.



Priorities in 2026

- We are still actively recruiting a member for the Professional and Career Development Chair. Having a full board allows us to continue to offer a full complement of services.
- The annual Pre-Course remains the most popular event we put on. We have had difficulty recruiting members for this committee which limits our ability to put on the course in a meaningful way.
- We will be offering other education in 2026 including two talks on Ankylosing Spondylitis in the new year.
- We will maintain the promotion and administration of the Clinical Innovation Award. We want to help move your big ideas forward so please submit your applications!



Research: Dr. Karine Toupin-April



Mandate

- Concern itself with research and research training in rheumatology.
- Undertake the peer review of all AHPA-submitted abstracts for presentation at the CRA/AHPA annual scientific meeting.
- Coordinate competition, submissions, and peer review of AHPA grants.



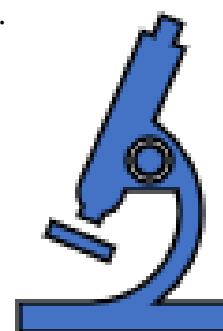
Achievements in 2025

- Coordinated review of 14 abstracts by 6 committee members. As Karine Toupin-April submitted an abstract, she recused herself from the selection and asked Paul Adam to lead the decision-making process.
- 4 Abstract Awards were awarded:
 - Carolyn Thomas Award for Best Scientific Abstract - Marie Westby
 - Barbara Hanes Memorial Award for Best Abstract Submitted by an OT - Mahta Rafieinia
 - ACPAC Abstract SIG Award - Laura Passalent
 - Best Trainee Abstract Award - Sophia Popescu
- Coordinated review of 2 grant applications by 4 researcher reviewers and 1 patient reviewer.
- 1 Research Grant was awarded
 - A \$5,000 grant was awarded to Jill Hall, Jordyn Burgar and collaborators for the project entitled “Pharmacist-physiotherapist collaborative management for early knee osteoarthritis (PACE-OA)”
- There were some calls with other AHPA board members to plan the dissemination of research results to AHPA members.



Priorities in 2026

- Collaborate with the Engagement President to increase relationships with research organizations.
- Solicit research news for the Newsbrief from AHPA members.
- Continue to liaise with partner organizations to share pertinent information of interest to AHPA members.



Sponsorship and Marketing: Tom Young



Mandate

- Concern itself with external communication/marketing, and the development and evaluation of fundraising targets and strategies for the purpose of generating revenue to support the activities of AHPA.
- Develop fundraising campaigns targeting corporations, foundations, individuals, and government.
- Participate in the development of a plan, budget, and agenda for the annual Pre-Course.
- Liaise with the Treasurer as part of the annual budget process.



Achievements in 2025

- New appointment of Tom Young to fill vacant chair position in June.
- Commitment of \$5000 in unrestricted education grant from Celltrion received.



Priorities in 2026

- IMMEDIATE follow up regarding funding.
- Explore wider sponsorship opportunities beyond traditional pharma partnerships.
- Prioritize longer term partnerships to increase sustainability.
- Form closer working relationships with ACPAC SIG to coordinate requests and limit overlap, which will hopefully increase mutual success.



Other Reports

ACPAC SIG Report: Michael Denton



Mandate

- The pillars supporting all our activities are Advocacy, Research, and Education, all underpinned by Leadership.
- Objectives of the SIG include
 - fostering collaboration between graduates and trainees,
 - supporting program graduates and trainees,
 - providing strategic direction to those interested in extended-role practice careers,
 - maintaining a collaborative relationship with the ACPAC program,
 - supporting research and professional development activities.



Achievements in 2025

- Sixty-five members were registered with the SIG in 2025, up 8 members from 2024.
- Julie Herrington completed her term as Chair in June 2025; Michael Denton started his term as Chair in September 2025.
- Subcommittees include Advocacy (Julie Herrington), Research (Laura Passalent), Education (Ngai Chow), Welcome (Lisa Robinson/Juanit Fazari), Orthopedics (Michael Denton) with the following subcommittees completed in 2025: Honorariums (Michaela McGuire), Program Development (Trinette Kaunds) and Planetary Health (Ahava Lipetz).
- ACPAC award winners in 2025 included Julie Herrington (AHPA Extraordinary Service Award), Michelle Bridge and Sue MacQueen (AHPA clinical innovation award), Rhonda Matthews (Ontario Physiotherapy Association Outstanding Volunteer Award), Julie Herrington (AHPA ACPAC Abstract Award).
- Communication to the broader membership was achieved through regular e-newsletters (ACtionPACKed NEWS), distributed 4 times throughout 2025.
- Research included a Scoping Review of ACPAC literature by Lisa Caldana, Julie Herrington, Laura Passalent and Kristi Whitney with Phase 1 completed and presented at an all members meeting.

continued next page

ACPAC SIG Report Continued: Michael Denton

Achievements in 2025 (continued)

- Advocacy efforts included presentations at the CRA ASM, OPA conference, participation in Arthritis Action Plan, CIHR THINC Grant, meetings with Canadian Physiotherapy Association and finalization of the ACPAC Advocacy Tools and Briefing document.
- Education opportunities at each all-member meeting, the SIG Annual meeting, the AHPA ACPAC SIG lecture, and the ACPAC Program lecture (8 events in total).
- ACPAC honorariums were given to members who presented at CRA (Laura Passalent) and OPA (Trinette Kaunds).



Priorities in 2026

- Continue with plans already established for all committees.
- Work with AHPA Sponsorship Chair to coordinate sponsorship asks.
- Finalize Advocacy Tools and Infographic for ACPAC SIG members.
- Education Events: ACPAC Program Lectures; Continue with short Education sessions at all member meetings.
- Welcome committee to continue to engage with ACPAC trainees.



Liaison Reports

Ontario Rheumatology Association: Osk Jenkins

The ORA-AHPA (Arthritis Health Professions Association) committee seeks to develop and maintain strong collaborative relationships between rheumatologists and Arthritis Health Professionals (AHPs) who work in arthritis care in Ontario. With a focus on inter-professional education, advocacy and patient care opportunities, the committee has continued to work towards the goal of optimizing positive patient outcomes. AHPA members continue to attend both the ORA and CRA ASMs and seek opportunities to collaborate and present new models of care (MoC) or activities involving collaborative care. At the most recent ORA meeting, the AHPA hosted an informal MoC meeting and we were fortunate to learn more about the Northern MoC from the ACPAC practitioner involved as well as other new or evolving models, both community based and hospital based. We learned about the Rheum RACs in Windsor and Peterborough operating through the Arthritis Society Canada.

Within the AHPA, the Advanced Clinician Practitioner in Arthritis Care (ACPAC) Special Interest Group (SIG) has an especially strong relationship with ORA. We have a new chairperson, Michael Denton recently replacing Julie Herrington. There has also been the development of an orthopedic subcommittee in the ACPAC SIG. ACPAC ESPs and Rheumatologists continue to be involved in patient advocacy initiatives targeted at the Ontario Government as well as working with our regulatory bodies. We will be releasing an infographic in mid- October to AHPA and ORA members. The infographic explains the role of the ACPAC Extended Scope Practitioners (ESPs). It highlights the diversity of locations ACPAC ESPs are practicing across Canada.

Because of this strong relationship between ORA and ACPAC graduates in Ontario, the AHPA liaison to the ORA will continue to be an ACPAC member who is active both in the AHPA at large and in the ACPAC Special Interest Group of the AHPA as well. Going forward this will continue to be Ósk Jenkins with support from other members as needed with the goal to increase opportunities for joint ORA and ACPAC education sessions and to increase collaborative ventures.

As always, we look forward to and welcome opportunities to work together to improve the lives of people living with arthritis. We will continue to strengthen our relationships through interprofessional engagement, advocacy, and education.

CRA Human Resources Committee: Jennifer Burt

The CRA Human Resources (HR) Committee ensures that the CRA workforce issues are identified nationally, provincially, and regionally and that appropriate strategies are developed to respond to shortages in manpower due to anticipated growth in demand.

The CRA HR Committee met virtually twice in 2025.

Dana Jerome continues as Committee Chair.

Priorities for 2025 included the following:

1. Present the Outreach Care Award to the CRA board
2. Enhance National Outreach programs to promote outreach participation by Rheumatology trainees
3. Develop workshops at the CRA ASM on efficiency and practice management

CRA Transition Working Group: Julie Herrington

National Transition Committee - Chaired by Dr. Michelle Batthish. The group met once in 2025.

ACPAC/AHPA representation - Michelle Bridge & Julie Herrington

Major Project: CRA Transition Clinical Practice Guidelines (CPG)

- Presented Guidelines at CRA Pediatric Grand Rounds in Fall 2025
- To be submitted to The Journal of Rheumatology in 2026

The committee celebrates individual projects across the country:

- Transition Website launched to support transition across Canada (<https://roadtoadultarthritiscare.ca>)

Financial Overview

AHPA expenditures in each of the 3 strategic priorities: Knowledge Translation, Engagement, and Sustainability. Our overall expenditures totaled \$61,405.00.

ENGAGEMENT

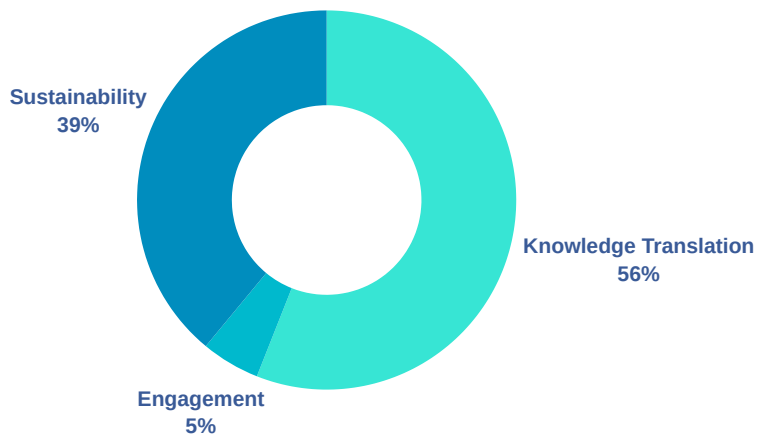
Expenses in this category include costs associated with collaboration with our external partners and marketing our organization.

KNOWLEDGE TRANSLATION

Expenses in this category cover our annual Pre-Course, AHPA OnlineED offerings, and all educational and research initiatives, including grants and awards.

SUSTAINABILITY

This includes costs associated with running an organization such as bookkeeping and accounting fees, insurance, bank fees, and website maintenance.



BOARD OF
DIRECTORS
100%
VOLUNTEER RUN

Sponsor Support

Thank you to our sponsors who supported our Annual Pre-Course and other educational activities in 2025:



Inspired by **patients**.
Driven by **science**.

*Inspirés par les **patients**. Guidés par la **science**.*



AHPA

ARTHRITIS HEALTH PROFESSIONS ASSOCIATION

