



For immediate release

Dr. Mamta Gautam to Receive CMA's first Physician Misericordia Award

Ottawa, August 16, 2011 – The Canadian Medical Association (CMA) today named Dr. Mamta Gautam the first-ever recipient of its Physician Misericordia Award. The CMA Physician Misericordia award recognizes outstanding contributions by a CMA member toward enhancing the overall health and well-being of physician colleagues at both the personal and professional levels, in particular during times of conflict and crisis.

“Dr. Gautam’s ground-breaking work in physician health and her complete devotion to helping her colleagues make her an outstanding first choice for this award,” said Dr. Jeff Turnbull, CMA President. “She is not only having a positive impact on physician health, she is also contributing to society at large because healthier physicians lead to healthier patients and a more efficient health care system.”

Mamta Gautam is a pioneer, specialist and champion of physician health and well-being. For 20 years she practised psychiatry in Ottawa, specializing in treating physicians in clinical practice. In 2009 she established PEAK MD, a company that focuses on leadership resilience and keeping physicians well.

“I am humbled by this award and honoured to be its first recipient,” said Dr. Gautam. “It has been my privilege to care for my physician colleagues over the years, and I have learned much of what I know about physician health from them. This award honours them - their strength, courage and resilience.”

As a member of the Department of Psychiatry, Faculty of Medicine at the University of Ottawa, she founded and was the first director of the Faculty Wellness Program at the University of Ottawa, Faculty of Medicine. The program became the template for similar programs at other medical schools, as well as for the Canadian Medical Association’s Centre for Physician Health and Well-being, where she is an expert physician advisor. She developed a peer mentoring program for the Ontario Psychiatric Association (OPA), later serving the OPA as president. She subsequently adapted the peer mentoring program for the Canadian Psychiatric Association.

“I am excited to have witnessed the advances in physician health in the past 20 years, growing from a handful of dedicated colleagues and local initiatives, to a rich network of committed experts and international collaboration and sharing of best practices,” Dr. Gautam said. “As physicians, we are care givers, not care receivers. Through our collective work in physician health, we have changed the culture of medicine, helped colleagues realize that none of us is immune to the frailties of being human, worked to reduce the stigma associated in reaching for help and increase the resources available, and given physicians the opportunity to receive the care and compassion they show to others daily.”

Dr. Gautam is a member of the planning committees for the International and Canadian Conferences on Physician Health. She also is the founding chair of the International Alliance for Physician Health and founding chair of Women in Psychiatry, and chaired a Canadian working group that developed a national strategy on physicians’ mental health. An internationally known expert and sought-after speaker, she writes regular columns on physician health for the *Medical Post* and the Canadian Society of Physician Executives. Her 2004 book *Irondoc: Practical Stress Management Tools for Physicians* became a national bestseller.

Dr. Gautam studied medicine at the University of Ottawa and did her specialty training in Ottawa. Her research interests include physician resiliency, work-life balance in medicine, domestic abuse in women physicians, medical leave and reintegration into residency, and assaults on physicians by patients. Her innovative work has earned her fellowship in both the Canadian and American psychiatric associations.

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Dr. Gautam will receive the Physician Misericordia Award on Aug. 24 at a ceremony at the D.F. Cook Recital Hall, Memorial University, in St. John's, N.L., as part of the CMA's 144th annual meeting.

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