

April 2021

LUPUS LINK



Lupus Ontario's Monthly Newsletter

21-25 Valleywood Drive, Markham, ON L3R 5L9 | 905-415-1099 or 1-877-240-1099

President's Message



Linda Keill

Happy Spring everyone! It has been a long tough winter and I am certain we are all looking forward to a new beginning with warm sunny days and the promise of more COVID19 vaccines on the horizon. Speaking of new beginnings, Lupus Ontario held the Annual General Meeting (AGM) on March 20th. At this meeting, we reported on the results for the fiscal year ended September 30th, 2020 and shared some of our plans for the current fiscal year. We also elected our new Board of Directors. It is an honour for me to have been elected as your President. I am so happy to report that all our Board positions are filled for the first time in several years. We have a great team lined up to serve you for the next two years. The bios of all our Board members are on the Lupus Ontario website on the [Governance page](#).

At the AGM, we also honoured two of our outstanding volunteers. The President's Donna Chu Award for unwavering commitment and dedication to the lupus community was presented to Yadi Castro. Yadi has been creating awareness and raising money for lupus research for the past several years despite significant health challenges. A Lifetime Service Award was presented to Gloria Checkley who is retiring from the Board this year. You can read more about Gloria's contributions in the Lifetime Service Award article below. Congratulations and a big thank you to these two amazing women who have given so much of their time and energy to serving the lupus community.

April is shaping up to be a busy month for us. On April 1st, we are planning to launch the 2021 Walk for Lupus Ontario website. Once again this year, we want to keep everyone safe and are planning a virtual event. Although we have targeted August 21st as the date for the event, you can participate at any time and in anyway you wish. Please share our social media posts promoting the Walk, register, create or join a team. This event is Lupus Ontario's largest and is critical to us to build awareness and to keep our research commitments and patient programs going. If you are interested in organizing a walk in your community, please contact info@lupusontario.org and we will help you get started.

On April 20th Dr. Konstantinos Tselios will be presenting a webinar, 'SLE and COVID: What is the Evidence?'. Don't miss this event to learn about the latest research regarding COVID-19 and lupus. Details on how to register for this event are outlined below.

In closing, I would like to thank Cathy Ferren for her leadership as President over the past two years. No one could have foreseen the challenges we would face because of the global pandemic. Luckily, Cathy had already encouraged us to move our meetings and other events to the digital world so we were able to continue to serve you when face to face meetings were no longer an option. Cathy will continue to volunteer for Lupus Ontario on the Support and Education Committee.

We are here to serve you, our members, so please do not hesitate to reach out to me with any suggestions or feedback at president@lupusontario.org.



LIFETIME SERVICE AWARD

Gloria Checkley started volunteering with the Ottawa Chapter of Lupus Ontario. Over the years she has been active in many facets of Lupus Ontario operations. In 2007, she joined the Board and has been serving as Secretary since 2014. For the past several years, Gloria has been the face of Lupus Ontario in Ottawa. She has been active in all the recent Walks for Lupus and has been the leader for several years. If there is a job to be done, no matter what it is, Gloria will always offer to help.

This year, Gloria is stepping down from the Board but will continue to volunteer for Lupus Ontario in the Ottawa area. At this time, we wanted to recognize Gloria for her incredible contribution over the past decades.

Thank you Gloria - you have made a difference in the lives of so many!

SLE AND COVID-19: WHAT IS THE EVIDENCE? WEBINAR

Presented by Dr. Konstantinos Tselios

Dr. Konstantinos Tselios started working in the field of systemic autoimmune diseases during his specialty training. He found his calling in Medicine when he engaged in clinical research in systemic lupus erythematosus for his PhD thesis. After completing that, he was awarded the Geoff Carr Research Fellowship from Lupus Ontario in 2014 and the opportunity to come to Canada. He was further trained in the Toronto Lupus Clinic under the supervision of Dr. Urowitz and Dr. Gladman for several years. In January 2021, he started a new chapter in his life by becoming an Assistant Professor with the Division of Rheumatology, McMaster University. In the near future, Kostas hopes to establish a Lupus Clinic and Biobank for research purposes in Hamilton with the generous support of Lupus Ontario.

Dr. Konstantinos Tselios, MD, PhD, will be discussing COVID-19 (what it is, how is it transmitted, impact on the general population, etc.) and then he will focus on the impact on the lupus community. He will give a brief description of the vaccines and what a lupus patient should know before the vaccination.

This webinar is free and we ask that you please **register in advance**.

Upcoming Events/Meetings

CLASSES

Dance and Medicine –
Intersection Between
Movement, Art and Chronic
Illness

April 10 @ 4 p.m.

April 24 @ 4 p.m.

APRIL WEBINAR

April 20 @ 7 p.m.

Join Dr. Konstantinos Tselios
for an in-depth discussion
regarding SLE and COVID-19.

SUPPORT MEETINGS

Young Adult Monthly Social
- April 6 @ 7 p.m.

Ottawa Online Support Group -
April 12 @ 7 p.m.

Provincial Lupus Online
Support Group - April 13 @ 7
p.m.

Durham Online Support Group
- April 26 @ 7 p.m.

MEDICAL EXPENSES

Written by Carolyn Pancham

Medical expenses for a life-long health condition has a financial impact. Prescription drugs, vision care, dental care, medical equipment, physiotherapy, transportation, health care supplies, hospitalizations, and caregiving services mount over time. Even with extended health and dental insurance coverage from your employer, many plans reimburse a percentage of your expense and are subject to limitations.

If you find yourself without a plan, the Ontario government offers an income-based [Trillium Drug Program](#) that may help with high prescription costs. Or, it may be time to explore the cost-benefit of private health and dental options. Here are some links to companies that provide coverage in Canada. Compare the premiums and benefits to see if it meets your needs.

[Manulife Health and Dental](#) – 1-844-378-3868

[SureHealth Canada](#) – 1-844-855-SURE (7873)

[Canada Life Health and Dental](#) – 1-800-737-8595

Regardless of your coverage level, the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) has a medical expenses non-refundable tax credit that reduces the amount of taxes payable. You can only claim eligible medical expenses that you have not been reimbursed. This credit is income-based.

To learn more about the medical expense tax credit, visit the following links or call CRA at 1-800-959-8281:

[CRA - Eligible medical expenses you could claim on your tax return](#)

[CRA - Medical Expenses 2020 Guide](#)

[CRA - Medical Expense Tax Credit Folio](#)

Remember to keep your supporting evidence (e.g. receipts, mileage logs, prescriptions, proof of disability, reimbursements, etc.) for any medical expenses you have incurred. A [medical expenses template](#) (found under the Presentations & Handouts section on the Education page) is a useful tool to log your expenses and track your reimbursements.

Stay tuned for next month's article highlighting the Trillium Drug Program.

***This article is intended to provide general information only. Please seek advice from a qualified professional for your situation.**

CELEBRATE WITH US IN MIND

If you have an upcoming birthday, anniversary or some other sort of celebration, we ask that you think of Lupus Ontario.

Facebook Fundraising has become quite the way to celebrate, especially in these COVID times. People are asking for donations to a cause close to their heart in place of a gift for their respective celebrations. You can set your own personal fundraising goal and set the time parameters - essentially creating your own personal fundraiser! All donations are processed via PayPal. For your next milestone, please keep Lupus Ontario in mind.

Visit the [Facebook Fundraising](#) page for more info!

DONATE WITH YOUR OPTIMUM POINTS

Many are taking to Shoppers Drug Mart and Loblaws to conduct your day-to-day shopping, so why not put those PC Optimum Points to use? You can donate some or all of your PC Optimum Points to Lupus Ontario. Above all this will help us purchase merchandise at Shoppers Drug Mart and Loblaws such as office supplies and fundraising items. To find out how you can convert your points in to a donation, please [click here](#).

Go ahead and splurge a little with your next shopping trip and earn more points... it's for charity after all!

PEER SUPPORT GROUPS

Lupus Ontario offers in person and online peer support groups. Check the Support Page on the web site for schedules and locations. Peer support groups are a safe place to share your lupus journey and learn from others in the group what has worked for them. Check the Support page on the web site for locations and schedules. During COVID-19 we are only hosting online meetings via Zoom.

Please complete and return via email your annual signed **Confidentiality Agreement**. Please send the signed copy to support@lupusontario.org at your earliest convenience.

We ask that you please register in advance for these meetings. After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing the link and information about joining the meeting. To maintain privacy we cannot publish the numbers in the newsletter.

CANADA'S COVID IMMUNIZATION PLAN

We know there are many questions regarding the upcoming COVID vaccine, so we have updated our website with **Canada's COVID-19 Immunization Plan** to help answer some of those questions. Canada is preparing to roll out an immunization response, which will provide Canadians with access to safe and effective vaccines to protect against COVID-19. This ambitious plan will be delivered through a principled and evidence-informed approach that puts protecting the health and safety of Canadians first.

We also invite you to stay up-to-date with **COVID restrictions** in your respective area!

VOLUNTEER WITH LUPUS ONTARIO

Please consider giving back to the community and volunteering your talents to Lupus Ontario. The volunteer **application form** is on our website.

People always ask for more personal stories of member's lupus journey in the newsletter - please consider submitting yours for the newsletter. There is always room on the committees for new members. Examples of committees are Fund Development, Public Awareness, Newsletter, and Support and Education.

MEETINGS/EVENTS TO COME

Young Adult Monthly Social - April 6, May 4, June 1 @ 7 p.m.

Dance and Medicine – Intersection Between Movement, Art and Chronic Illness – April 10 and April 24 @ 4 p.m.

Ottawa Online Support Group - April 12, May 10 and June 14 @ 7 p.m.

Provincial Lupus Online Adult Support Group - April 13, May 11, June 8 @ 7 p.m.

SLE and COVID-19: What is the Evidence? Webinar – April 20 @ 7 p.m.


Durham Online Support Group – April 26, May 31, June 28 @ 7 p.m.

MISSION

Lupus Ontario is a team of caring and enthusiastic volunteers and staff who are passionately committed to helping those with lupus live longer and better by raising funds that deliver vital support, education, awareness and research.

GOAL: LIFE WITHOUT LUPUS

Keep up with Lupus Ontario on social media!

 @LupusOntario

 @LupusON

 Lupus Ontario