



Anesthesiology & Pain Medicine UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

Dear Colleagues,

Anesthesiologists and intensivists are “heroes on the front lines” during the COVID-19 pandemic according to *Time* magazine. As noted on the cover shown below, yes, “our lives have changed,” but we’ll find ways to make our work and our lives better at the end of this journey. Thank you for your many tremendous contributions to Canadians during the pandemic.



Recognition: Dr. Anahi Perlas was recently recognition as a [Trailblazer by the American Society of Regional Anesthesia and Pain Medicine \(ASRA\)](#), as part of the Year of Women in ASRA. She is being honoured for her leadership, her achievements and her contributions to the field. Congratulations, Anahi!

Innovation in the face of COVID-19: Many of our investigators have pivoted their research programs to address the pandemic. Four faculty members received awards from the University Health Network and Mount Sinai COVID-19 Innovation Fund Competition. Congratulations to:

Principle Investigator	Project Title
Dr. Michael Dinsmore	3D Printed Filter Attachment for 3M Reusable Respirators
Dr. Anahi Perlas	Novel Hood Shield to Enhance PPE Security and minimize COVID-19 transmission to front-line health care workers performing high-risk Procedures
Dr. Azad Mashari	Individualized Automatic Lung Ventilation of Multiple Patients using Single ventilator Manufacture and deployment of nonaerosolizing non-invasive positive pressure ventilation mask to reduce or eliminate exposure to aerosolized COVID-19
Dr. Vincent Chan	Development of an Automated and Scalable Virtual Assistant to Aid in PPE Adherence and Clinical Protocols for Healthcare Worker Safety

Anesthetic gas machines as ICU ventilators: Anesthetic gas machines are now being used as ICU ventilators in some hospitals. A report published this week in the [Canadian Journal of Anesthesia](#) provides links to safety information and warnings from the APSF/ASA and Health Canada regarding the novel and “off-target” use of these devices in the treatment of COVID-19 patients. Thank you to **Dr. Bill Wong**, who sent a [photo of anesthetic gas machines](#) being used as an ICU ventilator in the post-anesthetic recovery room at Trillium Health Partners. For those who are interesting the usage of ventilators in the province of Ontario, information is available on the [Critical Care Services Ontario Website](#).

Anesthetic-related drug shortages: This week, [Health Canada announced growing shortages of narcotics, sedative drugs and neuromuscular blocking agents](#). To mitigate these drug shortages and improve patient outcomes, some have advocated for the use of inhaled anesthetics as sedatives for ICU patients. A [letter was recently published on the topic](#). Clinical trials are being planned at Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre and elsewhere to study the efficacy and safety of inhaled anesthetic drugs in the treatment of ICU patients. An excellent review of inhalational anesthetics as sedatives was published by [Dr. Angela Jerath](#).

Resident recognition and exams: The willingness of our senior residents to serve on the front lines, including participation on airway management teams, was recently acknowledged by **Dr. Kevin Smith**, CEO of University Health Network (UHN). In other news, the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada has announced that oral exams will not be required for the spring 2020 cohort. To obtain their specialty certification, these candidates will only be required to pass a written exam, which will be held in September 2020. We hope this decision helps to support our exceptional, hard-working senior residents.

Website updates: The COVID-19 section of our department’s website continues to evolve. Thank you to **Dr. Steve Bernstein** and his colleagues at Humber River Hospital for [the helpful video related to PPE activity](#). Please check your hospital sites for any differences in PPE protocols.

COVID-19 Intubation registry: Two complementary registries of intubations patients are being

developed with the goal of better preparing for future pandemics. The Canadian Anesthesiologists' Society has announced a [COVID-19 incident reporting program](#). Specifically, the Canadian Anesthesia Incidence Reporting System (CAIRS) has been modified to capture COVID-19-related events. This anonymous, practitioner-based reporting program is designed to provide event analyses and feedback to the members of Canadian anesthesia care teams. In contrast, [intubateCOVID](#) is a global registry for healthcare providers who are performing airway management procedures in patients with COVID-19. Approval for participation by Canadian physicians has been granted by various research ethics boards, including those at UHN. Please check with your local ethics review board to see if you have been deemed eligible to participate. We thank **Drs. Scott Beattie, Matteo Parotto and Ki Jinn Chin** for their leadership of these initiatives.

The CAS will be hosting another Town Hall series webinar on Sunday, April 19, 2020 on [COVID-19 Diagnosis and Ventilator Management Strategies](#). The discussion will on respiratory support for the COVID-19 patient, both on and off the ventilator, including oxygen therapy options, non-invasive positive pressure support and ventilator management. The challenges of the Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) assay in relation to COVID-19 detection, the lack of clinical assay performance data to guide interpretations for a negative result, and the various potential contributors to its clinical performance including how the sample is collected, as well as serological assay evaluation will also be discussed.

Please stay informed, stay calm and stay safe.

Best wishes,

Bev

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