EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR **REPORT**

Welcome to our Annual General Meeting and *Bringing Diversity to Healthcare* event!

Firstly, I would like to acknowledge our funders. Without the support of the Governments of Canada and Alberta, we would not be able to do all that we do in the interest of our membership. Secondly, I'd like to thank the Board of Directors for their continued support in my role as Executive Director. Last, but not least, I'd like to thank the staff for their ongoing support. Your contributions make AIMGA a better place and with your passion to deliver, I can honestly state, we strive to deliver high quality programming and services.

I've been at AIMGA in my role for the past year and a half. When I reflect on my time with the Association, it has been action packed. Leading a non-profit organization where the demands exceed our funding, is a challenge. However, what I love about challenges is that they lend themselves to creative thinking, collaborations, and being specific in what we do. The core values that remain constant for us at AIMGA are: believing in the economic integration of newcomers to Canada, respecting diversity, having meaningful outcomes, and making a positive contribution to the members we serve.

International doctors are particularly vulnerable. They come to Canada highly educated and highly skilled and yet have a complex journey in front of them. The window for arrival, completing examinations, obtaining required proficiency levels, and competing for residency seats is narrowing. It is not easy to navigate the system, to know where to start, and to understand the different provincial requirements and pathways. There's one assessment after another and just when you think you've proven your medical knowledge and skill to enter a Canadian training program, there's usually a new form of assessment or criteria. It can be lengthy and costly. While there's a saying, *things get easier with time*, one could argue the pathways to licensure for IMGs have become more difficult or competitive.

In the past year, we've been hard at work to put the necessary foundation in place upon which to build. We've launched a new website which will allow us to tailor our services based on the needs of our membership and to provide the evidence we need to seek funds and to report outcomes. As a professional association, we all have a role in advancing the integration of International Medical Graduates in the system. We are creating awareness of the skills and knowledge IMGs bring with them to Canada. We've started our member "spotlight" videos to capture these diverse skill sets. We are asking our membership to keep their profiles up-to-date, so we can advocate on their behalf. It is important our members understand what it means to belong to a professional association. As a professional association, we are placing importance on you being able to make informed decisions about your future career paths. We have launched an IMG survey in collaboration with the University of Calgary.

We've moved away from a first-come, first-serve model to putting the right person, in the right seat, at the right time to ensure we are utilizing resources effectively and providing relevant services based on where our members are in their integration into the system. We've also been working collectively to improve upon the quality and delivery of our programs and services based on your feedback, and we are working to implement a new research and community engagement strategy in partnership with employers and stakeholders.

In the next year, I look forward to *Bringing Diversity to Healthcare*, to creating pathways into the healthcare system for IMGs, and making sure they are equipped with the skills and knowledge to integrate successfully. This is what I'm passionate about and I look forward to working with all of you in the upcoming year.

With kindness and respect,

Deidre Lake
Executive Director

"When we strive to become better than we are, everything around us becomes better too."
-Paulo Coelho