



Ontario Medical  
Students Association

Association des étudiant·e·s  
de médecine de l'Ontario

## Ontario Medical Students Association (OMSA) Advocacy Values & Guiding Principles

Effective date: September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2017

Review date: January 8<sup>th</sup>, 2022

The Ontario Medical Students Association (OMSA) represents the interests and concerns of Ontario's 4000+ medical students, and is entrusted with advocating for changes in education, health policy, and care delivery that will benefit the future physicians of Canada and the communities that we serve.

Over the last several years, OMSA has been increasingly called on to express its support of campaigns and initiatives that seek to promote the wellbeing of medical students, patients, the healthcare system, and society at large. Consequently, in 2017 OMSA created the Health and Political Advocacy Values Statement (now the Advocacy Values & Guiding Principles document) to enable the organization to respond in a timely and transparent manner. This document **defines the values and principles of the advocacy work that OMSA firmly supports and will strive to uphold. This commitment will be reflected in OMSA social media statements, press releases, position papers, communications, and initiatives.**

In response to the evolving education, healthcare, and political landscape, this document was revised in January 2022 and approved by the 2021-2022 OMSA Council.

### MEDICAL STUDENTS

With the understanding that medical school can be a challenging physical, mental, intellectual and emotional experience, we are committed to supporting our membership by advocating for issues including, but not limited to:

1. Undergraduate medical education that incorporates high quality, current evidence-based practices that reflect the principles of social justice and patient safety;
2. Support for students requiring accommodations to ensure that access to opportunities is not limited by the student's specific abilities;
3. Availability of adequate resources to support medical students' wellbeing, including their mental, physical, emotional and spiritual health, until transition into a residency program or the alternative career of their choosing;
4. An evidence-based provincial health human resources strategy that ensures appropriate allocation of undergraduate and postgraduate medical positions relative to the needs of the Ontario health system.



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## PATIENTS

OMSA is committed to learning and advocating for culturally-safe healthcare practices to prioritize patient-centered care.

In recognition of health as a reflection of physical, social, mental, and environmental health, OMSA is dedicated to ensuring that all future patients experience to the fullest extent possible the prerequisites for health, as laid out by the World Health Organization in The Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion.

OMSA supports patient access to:

1. **Peace**, defined as sociopolitical and physical environments that are safe and health-promoting;
2. **Shelter**, defined as safe, affordable accommodations;
3. **Education**, that is of high quality and accessible from early childhood through to adulthood;
4. **Food**, defined as access to healthy, affordable food options regardless of area of residence or socioeconomic status;
5. **Income**, defined as a livable wage relative to the cost of living;
6. **A stable ecosystem and sustainable resources**, defined as the judicious use of natural resources with an intent to maintain their quality and availability to future generations; and
7. **Social justice and equity**, defined as a society that is free of discrimination and that accepts and promotes principles of inclusivity in all personal, professional, social and educational environments.

## HEALTH SYSTEM

OMSA affirms a commitment to the values set out in the Canada Health Act, such that a healthcare system should ensure:

1. **Universality**, in that public health insurance coverage should be provided to all those residing in the province of Ontario without discrimination;
2. **Comprehensiveness**, in that all medically necessary procedures be insured;
3. **Accessibility**, in that no financial, geographic, or physical barriers may exist that impede reasonable or timely access to medically necessary services;
4. **Public administration**, in that health insurance must be financed by a public, not-for-profit authority; and
5. **Portability**, in that health coverage not be denied to the insured who travel within or outside of Canada and that quality of care not be diminished regardless of location of receipt.

## COMMUNITY AND SOCIETY AT LARGE

We recognize that Ontario medical students are incredibly diverse in the communities they represent, and that with the increase of social media-based advocacy, we are no longer limited by geographic borders in what initiatives we can support. OMSA also recognizes that physicians



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and trainees learn and practice in communities to which they are socially accountable. As such, OMSA advocates for the engagement of these communities in setting and implementing advocacy priorities.

OMSA may also engage with global advocacy efforts, so long as they:

1. Intersect with the interests of patient populations that Canadian medical students encounter and are a part of;
2. Stand in solidarity with medical students and healthcare workers advocating for improved conditions and equitable access in healthcare systems around the world;
3. Increase medical students' exposure to population-based approaches to healthcare;
4. Prepare medical students to be socially accountable to the communities they serve;
5. Support short-term and long-term improvements in public services, states, and societies.

OMSA will support initiatives that are in accordance with its stated values and principles, at the discretion of the active OMSA Council and after consultations with relevant stakeholders. This support may be demonstrated through: written or verbal statement; social media posts; signature on petitions, letters, or statements by external parties; sponsorship; hosting of or participation in events and initiatives. We recognize the real and potential limitations to our advocacy efforts, in part due to resource limitations. In the event that we are not able to speak on an issue, the stance of our organization may be implied from the values stated herein this document.

*Revised this **January 8th, 2022**, to remain in effect indefinitely and until any subsequent Council or Executive formally proposes to revisit or revise these terms.*

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**Sinthu Senthillmohan**  
*Vice President of Advocacy*  
2021-2022

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ushma P.'.

**Ushma Purohit**  
*President & Chair*  
2021-2022