

Meeting M i n u t e s
Complementary and Integrative Medicine MIG
October 29, 2025

A videoconference meeting of the Complementary and Integrative Medicine MIG was held on October 29, 2025, beginning at 8:00 pm.

Present: Dr. Esther Konigsberg, Dr. Adrienne Junek, Dr. Elliot Jacobson, Dr. Fred Hui, Dr. Richard Nahas, Dr. Farah Tabassum

Regrets:

By Invitation:

OMA Staff: Alex Skublics

Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order.

Approval of Agenda

1. Discuss AGM agenda for November 26 including Elyse Sunshine's talk: Regulatory Landmines in Integrative Medicine
2. Fall Newsletter
3. Dr. Adrienne Junek update re: University of Ottawa, fellowship program
4. For discussion: research framework for communicating with insurers regarding Ayurveda
5. Dr. Elliot Jacobson update re: proposal to the University of Toronto for a fellowship in Integrative Medicine
6. Any other business.

Minutes for Approval, Meeting of September 18, 2025

1. Follow up tasks from last meeting:
 - Dr. Esther Konigsberg to contact the CMPA regarding talks on legal issues
 - Dr. Adrienne Junek to complete her draft presentation for IM fellowship and arrange a meeting with Dr. Esther Konigsberg to review
 - Dr. Esther Konigsberg to invite Dr. Kishore Singh to the next meeting
 - Dr. Fred Hui to discuss with Dr. Elliot Jacobson regarding a meeting with Dr. Nancy Whitmore

-Dr. Esther Konigsberg said she had spoken to a health lawyer, Elyse Sunshine, about a Regulatory Landmines and Integrative Medicine session and that it emphasized practical risks in

daily practice such as billing, informed consent, and advertising (Dr. Konigsberg had communicated with the CMPA and they do not give talks on CAM policy and RHPA reform).

-Dr. Esther Konigsberg said she tried to represent Dr. Richard Nahas and Dr. Fred Hui's concerns about RHPA in that conversation, but the lawyer felt discussing RHPA reform was not practical.

-Dr. Elliot Jacobson said RHPA reform is a massive overhaul and instead supported a practical session for day-to-day guidance and said such a talk might empower clinicians who are uncertain how to integrate IM into daily practice.

-Dr. Esther Konigsberg said she can follow up with the lawyer, propose an evening virtual talk in late November, and use OMA Connect and email to promote it. OMA can sign the participants up and provide the platform for the video conference. The lawyer's fee needs to be determined,

-Dr. Adrienne Junek questioned whether this could be framed as the group's AGM (Annual General Meeting).

-Dr. Esther Konigsberg agreed this talk could be like that and proposed a 7:00 PM start time.

-Dr. Adrienne Junek said she had made a fellowship proposal and is now networking with vice-deans to explore how to frame it with respect to the education structure.

-Dr. Adrienne Junek said she recently discovered the University of Ottawa Fellowship in Medical Simulation, which fits the desired model for practicing physicians, part-time, and tuition-based at around \$11,000.

-Dr. Adrienne Junek said she is considering whether, if Ottawa proves difficult, to partner directly with the University of Arizona.

-Dr. Adrienne Junek stated she plans to connect with the Canadian Academic Consortium for Integrative Healthcare Education (CACIHE) to get support on objectives and exam standards.

-Dr. Esther Konigsberg said the CACIHE objectives are outdated, and she can resend the newly revised competencies which were, while U.S.-centric, reviewed for international relevance and can be adapted to Canadian context.

-Dr. Adrienne Junek said she will also reach out to Dr. Adam Gavsie for support since he is affiliated with the University of Arizona.

-Dr. Esther Konigsberg asked Dr. Elliot Jacobson whether Dr. Fred Hui had reached out to him to discuss his desire to contact Nancy Whitmore.

-Dr. Elliot Jacobson said he hadn't heard from Dr. Fred Hui and wasn't updated on his process.

-Dr. Esther Konigsberg said it's best left to Dr. Fred Hui to decide if he wants to approach Dr. Elliot Jacobson to discuss further advocacy.

2. Dr. Elliot Jacobson update re: proposal to the University of Toronto for a fellowship in Integrative Medicine

-this was not discussed during the meeting

3. Fall Newsletter

-Dr. Esther Konigsberg asked if an article on Low Dose Naltrexone (LDN) had been published in the past.

- Dr. Elliot Jacobson said it may have been included with his Vitamin D article in the spring newsletter.
- Dr. Adrienne Junek said she may have written about LDN early on but doesn't recall.
- Dr. Elliot Jacobson said the Canadian Lyme Foundation is running the Lyme conference in Toronto on November 7–8 or 8–9.
- Dr. Esther Konigsberg asked Dr. Elliot Jacobson to send her the event info to distribute

4. Dr. Kishore Singh proposal re: Ayurveda

- Dr. Esther Konigsberg welcomed Dr. Kishore Singh, and the team introduced themselves.
- Dr. Kishore Singh said he is a family physician in Burlington who practices Ayurveda along with his wife and that his goal is to integrate Ayurveda with Western medicine as a complementary, preventive approach.
- Dr. Kishore Singh said Ayurveda has gained patient interest post-COVID due to emphasis on natural healing and that other countries have successfully integrated it.
- Dr. Esther Konigsberg asked what Dr. Kishore Singh hoped to gain from connecting with the group.
- Dr. Kishore Singh said he seeks exposure and inclusion of Ayurveda in the scope of complementary and integrative medicine.
- Dr. Adrienne Junek said the fellowship curriculum includes Ayurveda
- Dr. Kishore Singh said that he and his wife had sent a letter regarding an article that appeared in the Canadian Living Magazine on Ayurveda
- Dr. Esther Konigsberg asked whether the article in Canadian Living Magazine could be repurposed for the newsletter.
- Dr. Kishore Singh said yes, and they would revise it for a physician audience and send it in.
- Dr. Kishore Singh said his wife has written to over 20 insurance companies, with only one response so far that was negative.
- Dr. Esther Konigsberg said insurance coverage would require Ayurveda to be recognized as a regulated health profession by Ontario and stated the only applicable coverage at present is through Health Spending Accounts.
- Dr. Adrienne Junek asked about whether they had engaged stakeholders or consultants when approaching insurers.
- Dr. Kishore Singh said no and that they had contacted insurance companies directly
- Dr. Adrienne Junek said the group needs a strategy and messaging framework to appeal to insurers and proposed adding this as an agenda item for the next meeting.
- Dr. Esther Konigsberg agreed and said this is something that could be researched before the next meeting.

5. Any other business.

- Dr. Adrienne Junek said she is thinking about the future of medical education and how AI like ChatGPT may reshape learning.
- Dr. Adrienne Junek continued to say if well-structured objectives and AI tools are used, it may reduce costs for institutions as well change how integrative medicine is taught in the future.

New Business

-The team approved the meeting minutes for the September 18, 2025 meeting.

1. Discuss AGM agenda for November 26 including Elyse Sunshine's talk: Regulatory Landmines in Integrative Medicine

-Dr. Esther Konigsberg said there is strong interest in the upcoming talk by Elyse Sunshine on regulatory compliance. It is confirmed for Wednesday, November 26. A second reminder was sent out today, with 47 participants signed up, indicating high engagement. The session will cover compliance and safety, followed by a brief AGM.

-Dr. Farah Tabassum questioned whether there is a submission form for attendees to pose questions.

-Dr. Esther Konigsberg said that while there isn't a form, Elyse already has a 45-minute talk scheduled with 15 minutes for audience Q&A, but the team could still invite advance questions.

-Dr. Esther Konigsberg said that for the AGM, they can highlight the group's progress toward Royal College recognition, with Adrienne discussing efforts to establish a fellowship supporting that process.

-Dr. Richard Nahas said that even though visible progress may appear slow, substantial work and correspondence have occurred. He suggested Dr. Esther Konigsberg and Dr. Adrienne Junek could jointly summarize their advocacy and activity for the group.

-Dr. Esther Konigsberg and Dr. Adrienne Junek said they will present an update on the Royal College application process.

2. Fall Newsletter

-Dr. Esther Kongisberg said she has updated Dr. Singh's article for the newsletter

-Dr. Esther Konigsberg said a second reviewer is needed before newsletter release since she will be away.

-Dr. Richard Nahas said he would be willing to review the newsletter

-Alex to complete the newsletter, send it to Dr. Richard Nahas for review, and then forward it to OMA.

3. Dr. Adrienne Junek update re: University of Ottawa, fellowship program

-Dr. Adrienne Junek said she has been networking with U Ottawa deans to pitch the fellowship. She was referred to the PGY-3 Family Medicine program since she is a family doctor however her current vision is a part-time fellowship that can run alongside clinical practice, using an adaptive mentorship model for ongoing integrative medicine training.

-Dr. Adrienne Junek said she also recently attended two conferences which reignited her interest in developing a national organization. She learned that while university-based fellowships offer credibility, they have long approval timelines. Therefore, she suggested building an independent organization-run fellowship first, which a university could later adopt.

-Dr. Elliot Jacobson questioned whether the proposed organization would exist exclusively to create and administer the fellowship, or whether the fellowship would be one project within a broader educational mandate.

- Dr. Adrienne Junek said the organization would have multiple roles alongside developing the fellowship such as hosting educational conferences and posting online resources. An administrative coordinator would be hired to manage logistics such as accreditation, hotels, and registration.
- Dr. Elliot Jacobson asked whether sustainability would depend on membership fees and whether there would be enough interest to fund an administrative team.
- Dr. Adrienne Junek said they can look at similar small organizations that function well and replicate their structure.
- Dr. Esther Konigsberg said university affiliation remains essential for Royal College recognition, but agrees with building the fellowship concurrently. Dr. Adrienne Junek should maintain contact with universities while developing the independent structure.
- Dr. Richard Nahas suggested this may be an ideal time to network with the new Ottawa Hospital, advocating for an Integrative Medicine Centre. He suggested Dr. Adrienne Junek reach out
- Dr. Adrienne Junek said she will research the hospital opportunity.
- Dr. Richard Nahas said U.S. Ivy League institutions often host limited IM research and consultation services. Canadian hospitals are increasingly adopting integrative care, so the timing may be favorable.
- Dr. Adrienne Junek said establishing an active fellowship cohort could facilitate hospital partnerships for clinical space.
- Dr. Richard Nahas questioned whether there are other institutional options if Ottawa doesn't work.
- Dr. Adrienne Junek said university affiliation is required for Royal College accreditation so a functioning fellowship could later be adopted by a university more easily than starting from scratch.
- Dr. Richard Nahas said he is part of an international neural training organization (~150 hours total, 50 hands-on). Their mostly virtual model could serve as a template. Foundational content can be delivered online and recorded for reuse.
- Dr. Esther Konigsberg said that University of Arizona offers a 500-hour integrative medicine course already approved and available for licensing to other fellowships.
- Dr. Adrienne Junek said this is feasible since they are already affiliated with U Arizona.
- Dr. Farah Tabassum questioned whether instead of creating a new group, they could affiliate with an existing organization.
- Dr. Adrienne Junek said the injection-therapy group invited collaboration and conference participation, but she is uncertain since independence maintains focus, but collaboration could help build momentum.
- Dr. Elliot Jacobson questioned whether that organization includes MDs and allied health.
- Dr. Adrienne Junek said it is primarily MDs, but includes nurses, naturopaths, and NPs capable of performing injections.
- Dr. Elliot Jacobson said inclusion of non-MD participants may raise concerns for Royal College accreditation.
- Dr. Richard Nahas said differences among MDs, NPs, and naturopaths must be considered. He is working on data tools to measure care outcomes, including collaborations with acupuncture schools in the GTA. He noted the broader goal is to embed integrative therapies into mainstream healthcare.
- Dr. Adrienne Junek said NPs should not be excluded as this fellowship could still confer

certification for them even if not university-accredited.

-Dr. Adrienne Junek said the organization could serve as a collaborative platform managed by an administrative lead, allowing launch within a year. She asked Dr. Elliot Jacobson why CIMA had failed

-Dr. Elliot Jacobson said that despite a common interest in functional medicine, it lacked a shared vision and defined goals

-Dr. Adrienne Junek said a focus group could define mission and goals by compiling all member ideas into a cohesive national vision.

-Dr. Esther Konigsberg questioned who would comprise this group for the new organization.

-Dr. Adrienne Junek said she is contacting both MDs and allied health practitioners, aiming for a small, cohesive core (~5 people)

-Dr. Esther Konigsberg said that starting with a smaller team is wise to maintain focus.

-Dr. Adrienne Junek said she will draft a group email for members to suggest potential collaborators.

-Dr. Esther Konigsberg suggested they should review the University of Arizona faculty list for possible contacts as well.

-Dr. Adrienne Junek said she will do so.

-Dr. Elliot Jacobson said this “build-first, certify-later” approach is likely most practical.

-Dr. Adrienne Junek said she hopes everyone will attend conferences and join as members as the organization evolves.

-Dr. Esther Konigsberg agreed that creating an organization is a good first step.

-Dr. Adrienne Junek said she is brainstorming names, preferring to include “Integrative” and “Functional Medicine.” Her current idea: *Canadian Association of Integrative and Functional Medicine*.

-Dr. Farah Tabassum and Dr. Esther Konigsberg said they liked this title.

4. For discussion: research framework for communicating with insurers regarding Ayurveda

-Dr. Esther Konigsberg said she recently spoke with Kishore Sign about Ayurveda and insurance coverage. Many of her patients only receive reimbursement via health spending accounts, so she raised whether the group could advocate for broader insurance recognition of allied health and integrative modalities.

-Dr. Adrienne Junek said she supported this idea but lacks insurance industry contacts to advance it.

-Dr. Elliot Jacobson said they would need to connect with individuals inside insurance providers, not just brokers.

5. Dr. Elliot Jacobson update re: proposal to the University of Toronto for a fellowship in Integrative Medicine

-this was not discussed during the meeting

6. Any other business.

Tasks for executives:

- Dr. Esther Konigsberg and Dr. Adrienne Junek to work on presenting an update on the Royal college application at the upcoming AGM
- Dr. Adrienne Junek to continue developing fellowship including discussions with University of Ottawa, Ottawa hospital, and continue networking to build core group for independent organization.
- Dr. Richard Nahas to review the newsletter and forward to the OMA once received from Alex
- Dr. Esther Konigsberg and Dr. Adrienne Junek to evaluate the University of Arizona curriculum as a possible fellowship framework
- All executives to reflect on structure/goals of the independent organization for further discussion at the next meeting

Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday, January 14, 2026

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 pm