

Meeting Minutes
Complementary and Integrative Medicine MIG
January 14, 2026

A videoconference meeting of the Complementary and Integrative Medicine MIG was held on January 14, 2026, beginning at 8:00 pm.

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

Regrets: Dr. Fred Hui

By Invitation:

OMA Staff: Alex Skublics

Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order.

Approval of Agenda

1. Debrief AGM and Elyse Sunshine's talk.
2. Dr. Adrienne Junek update re: (University of Ottawa) fellowship program
3. Discuss structure/goals of the "*Canadian Association of Integrative and Functional Medicine*".
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 October 29, 2025

-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 Konigsberg 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.

New Business

-The team approved the meeting minutes for the October 29, 2025 meeting.

1. Debrief AGM and Elyse Sunshine’s talk.

-Dr. Esther Konigsberg questioned how people felt about the meeting.

-Dr. Farah Tabassum said it was great, a nice way to give guidance to people not ready to dive in yet, and to give thoughts on what to consider before diving in.

-Dr. Elliot Jacobson said he was happy to see a big turnout, reflecting strong interest and that the speaker focused on the regulatory hurdle to doing something outside convention and on increasing the number of doctors practicing this way.

-Dr. Esther Konigsberg said some of it was “101,” but it also touched on pertinent issues for Integrative Medicine, stating how important it is. Also that Elyse did a good job and she was happy with how many people were engaged. She said the talk is now up on the webpage and she emailed the group.

-Dr. Esther Konigsberg said she discovered OMA Connect has been shut down and she did not realize it was down.

-Dr. Esther Konigsberg OMA connect was shut down in September and there is a lot of information in the library. She had asked admin to search for it so they can access it to put on the webpage.

-Dr. Elliot Jacobson questioned what OMA will support in terms of the website.

-Dr. Esther Konigsberg said they have a webpage on the constituency page with an archive of meeting minutes and now Elyse’s talk. She stated how the website is publicly accessible and there is no longer an advantage to being a member if everything is public versus with OMA connect.

-Dr. Richard Nahas questioned whether they can get a QR code for the website.

-Alex said he can generate one via a website.

-Dr. Elliot Jacobson questioned whether they can password-protect the link.

-Dr. Esther Konigsberg said they can, but questioned how they would distribute it to people signing up.

-Dr. Elliot Jacobson questioned why OMA Connect was sun-setted.

-Dr. Esther said it was not used much.

-Dr. Richard Nahas questioned whether it is possible to set up an automation where a sequence of 5–6 emails trickle into the inbox every few days as an introduction to the MIG when someone becomes a member,

-Dr. Esther Konigsberg said she will speak to Janice to see if that can be facilitated technically.

2. Dr. Adrienne Junek update re: (University of Ottawa) fellowship program

-Dr. Adrienne Junek said she is doing a talk for residents and hopes the lecture can be an introduction to chronic fatigue syndrome, overlapping with things Dr. Elliot Jacobson talks about.

-Dr. Adrienne Junek said an expert could dig into each aspect for the chronic complex unit of the fellowship to enable diagnosis and treatment of topics like orthostatic hypotension (POTS).

-Dr. Richard Nahas said he would love a webinar on chronic fatigue and that he could offer 3–4 slides on how interference fields contribute to dysregulation of psychoneuroendocrine function

in CFS.

-Dr. Adrienne Junek said she is interested in taking a look.

-Dr. Adrienne Junek said she has been networking across the country and learned where difficulty was encountered in the past. She has been creating something independent of universities before reaching out and that she networked with people at the University of Ottawa but did not get support to build something beyond PGY3 and said that is not the way to go. Currently she has looked at University of Arizona models as a basis.

-Dr. Adrienne Junek said University of Arizona fellowship foundation curriculum costs approximately \$17,000 and she still needs to do the math but pooling funds could cover about a dozen fellows, which she considered not unreasonable.

-Dr. Adrienne Junek said feasibility depends on using modules and supplementing with Canadian content and she is still networking with people who have sent materials to assemble pre-existing content into something systematic, one step at a time.

-Dr. Esther Konigsberg said it would still be less expensive than University of Arizona as some Canadians take the Arizona course each year and it can cost up to \$40,000 USD.

-Dr. Adrienne Junek agreed.

-Dr. Adrienne Junek said it could be interdisciplinary, engaging nutritionists and dieticians, not just physicians so they could find people with the right expertise for specific areas.

-Dr. Richard Nahas questioned how many hours the program is.

Dr. Adrienne Junek said Arizona is 550 hours.

-Dr. Adrienne Junek said she is collecting objectives by expertise, will make a word map to identify gaps, distribute work, estimate hours, and potentially ask about 100 people for roughly one hour each.

-Dr. Richard Nahas questioned how much of the 550 hours is true didactic teaching versus self-study.

-Dr. Esther Konigsberg said it is 550 hours of full-on didactic including lectures, interactive components, reading, and answering questions.

-Dr. Esther Konigsberg said the American Board of IM requires a minimum of 1,000 hours for fellowship recognition.

-Dr. Esther Konigsberg said fellowships using this curriculum add specialty didactics and clinical hours and could similarly add supervised clinical hours.

Dr. Esther Konigsberg said clinical hours could include IM intake and Arizona-style treatment plans under supervision.

-Dr. Adrienne Junek said the goal is a combination of didactic teaching and supervised clinical - mentorship. She said the Canadian version need not be exactly 1,000 hours but it is a good benchmark.

-Dr. Adrienne Junek said they could combine Arizona didactic content with Canadian content and supervised mentorship.

-Dr. Esther Konigsberg cautioned that involving 100 people requires vetting, licensing, ensuring up-to-date information, compensation, and coordination and this could be a full-time job.

-Dr. Adrienne Junek agreed and said they would need a full-time admin person.

-Dr. Elliot Jacobson questioned whether the program would be based Dr. Rakel's textbook tied to an exam.

-Dr. Adrienne Junek said she had not considered that but found the idea interesting.

-Dr. Elliot Jacobson an IM textbook could serve as a skeleton outline, including theory of history-taking, to define self-learning versus didactic content.

-Dr. Esther Konigsberg said she is chair on a fellowship committee and has access to the application framework and will share it with everyone.

-Dr. Esther Konigsberg described faculty fellowship models with two hours of live online tutorials weekly and the rest in the fellow's clinic where fellows log hours, submit weekly cases, and apply learning in their own clinics.

-Dr. Adrienne Junek mentioned some issues around controversial topics such as chronic Lyme and said these topics should be taught by clearly stating evidence, limits, and safe navigation.

3. Discuss structure/goals of the "*Canadian Association of Integrative and Functional Medicine*".

-Dr. Richard Nahas questioned about the value of the organization.

-Dr. Adrienne Junek said it is required to apply for Royal College certification; it could run the fellowship until academic affiliation is achieved and that it would support networking, a website, and webinars.

-Dr. Adrienne Junek mentioned Mandeep Singh as someone enthusiastic and interested in being affiliated. She will reach out and invite him to the next meeting.

-Dr. Esther Konigsberg agreed.

-Dr. Richard Nahas questioned how many provinces are required.

-Dr. Adrienne Junek said five, and she has contacts in about eight.

-Dr. Esther Konigsberg proposed starting with their own website and a small group to develop a mission statement.

-Dr. Adrienne Junek said she already has a mission statement and presented it.

Dr. Esther Konigsberg proposed a group discussion to further refine it.

-Dr. Richard Nahas said this would be a great initiative and webinars would help build membership. He stated that in-person meetings may be difficult but the collaboration is valuable.

-Dr. Esther Konigsberg asked Dr. Adrienne Junek to email the mission statement.

-Dr. Adrienne Junek agreed.

4. For discussion: research framework for communicating with insurers regarding Ayurveda
-this was no discussed

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

-Dr. Esther Konigsberg asked Dr. Elliot Jacobson about contacting Dr. Angela Cheung.
-Dr. Elliot Jacobson said he has not connected yet and will follow up by email.

6. Any other business.

-Dr. Esther Konigsberg said creating webinars similar to the AGM would be great where we
invite a presenter and record it for the website.

-Dr. Adrienne Junek said CME accreditation allows charging a small fee and providing credits.

-Dr. Richard Nahas said accredited content is recognized in Canada and that once accreditation is
done, future events are streamlined.

-Dr. Richard Nahas said he will send links before the end of the call.

-Dr. Esther Konigsberg questioned whether anyone has a talk they would like to give.

-Dr. Adrienne Junek said she is happy to present on chronic fatigue.

-Dr. Farah Tabassum asked about Dr. Adrienne Junek's previous talks on nutrients and
medications.

-Dr. Adrienne Junek said that content is proprietary but she will inquire. She also gave a talk on
fibromyalgia.

-Dr. Elliot Jacobson said he spoke at a Lyme conference and he is happy to deliver it again after
refining it.

-Dr. Esther Konigsberg questioned the duration.

-Dr. Elliot Jacobson said approximately 30 minutes.

-Dr. Farah Tabassum questioned whether linking existing talks is more efficient.

-Dr. Adrienne Junek said yes if recorded; otherwise, repeating is reasonable.

-Dr. Esther Konigsberg said live delivery fosters community.

-Dr. Adrienne Junek said live Q&A supports CME accreditation.

-Dr. Elliot Jacobson and Dr. Richard Nahas agreed

-Dr. Elliot Jacobson inquired about the date for his presentation.

-Dr. Esther Konigsberg suggested the third week of March, stating Wednesday March 25 at 7:00
pm as the tentative time.

-Dr. Elliot Jacobson agreed.

Tasks for executives:

- Dr. Esther Konigsberg to follow up with OMA admin regarding recovery/access to archived materials from OMA Connect for potential placement on the webpage.
- Dr. Esther Konigsberg to speak with Janice regarding the technical feasibility of setting up automated onboarding emails
- Dr. Adrienne Junek to email the existing mission statement to the group for review.
- Dr. Elliot Jacobson to reach out to Dr. Angela Cheung to follow up about meeting
- Dr. Adrienne Junek to reach out to Mandeep Singh to discuss involvement and invite him to the next meeting
- Dr. Elliot Jacobson to prepare and send a short synopsis and bio for his proposed webinar
- -Dr. Richard Nahas will send links re: getting accreditation for webinars.

Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday, February 25, 2026

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 pm