

Meet Siddhartha

Educational Resource Developer



Siddhartha Sood, HBSc

Medical Student, University of Toronto

Why did you get involved with CSPA?

As an undergraduate student, I was fortunate to gain exposure to the field of dermatology through research on melanoma, a form of skin cancer. When learning about this devastating disease and interacting with those affected in my local community, I gained an appreciation for how important it is to not only have effective treatments, but to also recognize the burden it can have on patients and their families. As a medical student, I have pursued this interest with clinical research on various skin diseases which has further taught me about the diversity and complexity of these conditions along with the impact they have on quality of life.

However, a lot of this knowledge is contained within the “scientific realm” — there often exists a gap between medical knowledge and patient understanding. Through volunteering with the CSPA, I am grateful to contribute to bridging this gap so that patients have a source they feel comfortable accessing for high quality information that can provide insight into their disease and empower their care.

Why do you like volunteering with CSPA?

I am appreciative of the opportunity to work on articles for the *Canadian Skin* magazine and create resources for patients because I find it really rewarding. With the support of CSPA’s amazing staff and my fellow volunteers, I am able to explore my curiosity on fascinating topics in dermatology and develop my skills in effective communication of complex topics, patient education, and health advocacy.

Through close family members that live with skin disease, I have witnessed the immense impact that it can have physically, mentally, and emotionally. With these lived experiences in mind, along with those unique to each individual patient or community, I am fortunate to be doing my part in improving the knowledge translation of skin, nail, and hair diseases and in helping patients navigate the health system.

Why would you tell others that they should get involved with CSPA?

Without a doubt, getting involved with the CSPA has been one of my stand-out experiences in medical school thus far. I really believe that the skills I have gained will help me be an effective communicator and advocate for my future patients. In addition, it has been a pleasure to work with all the supportive and helpful CSPA staff. It has been great to learn more about dermatology in the process along with the complexity and diversity of disease, their treatments, and the patient populations the specialty serves. I would highly recommend reaching out if you are interested in learning more about this field and developing your skills!

Has a personal connection with the skin patient community inspired your participation?

From witnessing the impact of skin disease on immediate family members, I feel personally inspired to participate in these initiatives with the CSPA. Dermatology is a rapidly advancing field; however, navigating all these new innovations along with the health system can be a tremendous challenge. Through CSPA projects such as the *Canadian Skin* magazine and online patient education articles, I now have a resource I can use and recommend to family and friends to assist in understanding their care, especially as access to specialists can be limited at times. My hope is that – similar to my personal experience with my loved ones – patients across Canada feel better equipped to understand their disease along with when and how to seek care.