

# Dr. Karen Breeck receives the 2009 CSPE Excellence in Medical Leadership Award



Dr. Don Atkinson, CSPE President presents Dr. (Major) Karen Breeck with the CSPE Excellence in Medical Leadership Award

Karen Breeck, an exceptional physician leader and a standing member of the CSPE, excels at all three criteria for the CSPE Excellence in Medical Leadership Award.

## *Leadership in a hospital or health region management role*

Dr. Breeck displayed her excellent leadership skills in building the student wing of the Federation of Medical Women of Canada (FMWC). Over the last four and a half years, she has inspired many medical students and residents to pursue leadership opportunities and has ensured

that student/resident representatives are heard at the FMWC board level. Dr. Breeck has also served as an educator in the Canadian Forces, providing lectures in aeromedicine and physiology to military student pilots and physicians in their flight surgeon course. Her love for student mentoring is also shown by her voluntary involvement in Ontario Medical Association and Memorial University student mentoring programs.

As Major Breeck, Karen has an impressive CV that highlights extensive training and leadership in aerospace medicine — a mix of preventive, community and occupational medicine. She completed a Canadian aerospace medicine

fellowship/American aerospace medicine residency and is US board certified in preventive medicine. She also received a certificate for women's studies within her master's degree in health sciences (occupational health) from the University of Toronto. She is an elected fellow of the Aerospace Medicine Association and the American College of Preventive Medicine, running last year for the position of aerospace medicine regent. She is also an elected academician of the International Congress of Aviation and Space Medicine.

Karen has worked as physician lead in a number of civilian and military locations including northern Ontario, Greenwood (Nova Scotia), Goose Bay (Labrador), Moose Jaw (Saskatchewan), the Golan Heights (Israeli-occupied Syria), Geilenkirchen

(Germany) and, while on secondment to the Canadian Space Agency in St. Hubert (Quebec). She has worked in such diverse capacities as an UN peacekeeper and as a COS at a rural hospital, was team physician for the much-beloved Canadian Force's aerobatic display team the "Snowbirds," supported Canadian astronauts on shuttle missions from Johnson Space Centre, Texas, and provided Canadian medical oversight to casualties from Afghanistan transferred to Germany before evacuation back to Canada. She has also fulfilled several administrative tours of duty, including one in the office of the medical advisor to the chief of air staff at National Defence Headquarters. Currently, she is occupational health and environment physician with the directorate of Force Health Protection in Ottawa until 27 April when she retires after 20 years of loyal service to her country.

## *Commitment to enhancing the role of physicians in the management of health care delivery organizations*

Dr. Breeck is committed to enhancing the role of physicians in the management of health care delivery organizations and has used her role as president of the FMWC to broaden the federation's role in the social and medical issues of concern to women in the community. She embarked on negotiations with the Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada (SOGC) and the Canadian Medical Association (CMA) to create a collaborative framework to further the mutual goals of these diverse organizations. FMWC is currently at the same location as the SOGC and shares infrastructure and services, where possible, to reduce administrative overhead costs. In 2007 and 2008, the FMWC partnered with the

SOGC to deliver annual continuing medical education events at the same time to capitalize on the broad reach of membership across both organizations and enhance mutual awareness.



*Significant contribution to leadership development within the CSPE or the CMA or one of its divisions or affiliated societies*

During Dr. Breeck's term as president of the FMWC in 2005–2006, her extensive military experience led her

to formalize many procedures and practices within the federation. She was able to negotiate an historic memorandum of agreement between the FMWC and the CMA that has ensured long-term collaboration between the two organizations. She also initiated discussions with the SOGC that allowed the FMWC to partner with this group to further women's health care in Canada. Karen Breeck is a transformational leader, who brings her unique skills, talents and perspectives to her work as a medical leader.

Karen Breeck has become a vital part of the FMWC. Her leadership skills have benefited the Board of Directors tremendously and, in her current role, as the chair of the Awards Committee, she continues to be an active participant. Dr. Breeck's presidency year for the FMWC created an infrastructure that will be used to further the FMWC vision and mission statement. Dr. Breeck is a medical leader who has brought determination and drive to the organization and has positioned the FMWC to move forward into this millennium.



Ken Lin

## Flight surgeon receives CSPE's highest leadership honour

*Patrick Sullivan, cma.ca*

A doctor who has looked after the health of Canada's military pilots and provided medical oversight for soldiers wounded in Afghanistan has been awarded the 2009 Excellence in Medical Leadership Award by the Canadian Society of Physician Executives (CSPE).

Major Karen Breeck, a flight surgeon who retired from the Canadian Forces this April after 20 years' service, received the award during the society's recent annual meeting in Vancouver. It honours her leadership roles in the Canadian Forces and as president of the Federation of Medical Women of Canada (FMWC).

CSPE President Don Atkinson said the award recognizes Breeck's extensive training in aerospace medicine and honours the major impact she had on the FMWC. "During her term as president in 2005–06, her extensive military experience led her to formalize many procedures and practices within the federation," the citation states. "She brought determination and drive to the organization and has positioned it to move forward."

Breeck is not sure what the future holds now that she is out of uniform, and will not decide until she has taken some time off — something that is possible because of her immediate access to a military pension. "I am a full-fledged supporter of having all docs receive pensions," she said.