

In Memoriam: Dr. Thomas Cheetham



Our dear friend and colleague, Dr. Tom Cheetham, MD, Fellow of the American Association of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (FAAIDD), passed away August 20, 2018 in Nashville, TN after a battle with cancer.

Tom was passionate about the healthcare of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). This passion

began prior to his medical school training when he and his wife were live-in house parents for a group individuals with IDD in Hamilton. He completed his family medicine residency at Oxford Regional Centre in Woodstock and became the Chief Physician until the Centre closed. In 1982 he opened his family practice in Woodstock and continued to advocate for individuals with IDD.

Subsequent appointments included being Director of the Developmental Disabilities Program at Western University in London. His other duties while at the Program as Western was the sole physician of a 24-bed dual diagnosis unit at St. Thomas Psychiatric Hospital. He was Chief Physician at Southwestern Regional Centre, and Chief Physician at Rideau Regional Centre. In the latter capacity, he worked closely with Dr. Bruce McCreary, Director of the Division of Developmental Disabilities program at Queen's University. During this time, he played an active role in development of the Canadian consensus guidelines for primary care of adults with developmental disabilities (Sullivan et al., 2011; 2018), the health care tool kits for primary care providers of people with IDD and health watch tables for selected developmental and related disabilities (Developmental Disabilities Primary Care Initiative (2011). Tom also held appointments in the Departments of Family Medicine and Psychiatry at the University of Western Ontario, Family Medicine at Queen's University, and Family Medicine at the University of Toronto. In the United States, he was an adjunct assistant professor of Psychology and Human Development at Vanderbilt's Peabody College.

Dr. Cheetham's expertise led to appointment as Medical Director at Orange Grove Center, Chattanooga, Tennessee, in 2009. After a brief period at Surrey Place Centre, he returned to Tennessee in 2011, first as Director, Office of Health Services and later as Deputy Commissioner of Health Services for the Tennessee Department of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities. Though based in Tennessee, Dr. Cheetham never forgot his Canadian roots and he continued to be an active contributor to the Canadian consensus guidelines, the health

Authors

Communicated by
Shirley McMillan
and the JoDD
Chief Editorial Board

Correspondence

Shirley.McMillan@
SurreyPlace.ca

Keywords

intellectual and
developmental
disabilities,
primary care,
health care tool kits,
health watch tables

care tool kits and the health watch tables. He was instrumental in disseminating the tools and health watch tables in the United States and internationally. Other publications included book chapters on physical health, the use of psychotropic medications in management of problem behaviours in adults with IDD, and video training modules for health professionals.

Tom was the consummate teacher; he always had time to talk to anyone and would also take the time to make sure the issue was addressed. He was a caring and compassionate man who always seemed to be able to interact with any individual despite their level of functioning. In 2007 he was selected as the Physician of the Year by the Developmental Disabilities Nurses Association. In 2012 he was recipient of the Ontario Association on Developmental Disabilities (OADD) Award of Excellence for better understanding of, or enhancing the quality of life for, those with developmental disabilities. In 2017, he was honoured with the inaugural Surgeon General's Spirit Award for Outstanding Leadership and Service established by the American Academy of Developmental Medicine and Dentistry.

The field of IDD mourns the loss of a passionate and compassionate advocate. The Journal of Developmental Disabilities extends sincerest condolences to dear friend Shirley McMillan, his family, other friends and colleagues.

Sources: In part from obituaries prepared by: Jan Rosemergy, Vanderbilt Kennedy Center Director of Communication and Dissemination (<https://vkc.mc.vanderbilt.edu/notables/2018/08/remembering-dr-tom-cheetham-physician-and-advocate/>); yourlifemoments.ca, Woodstock, ON (<http://www.yourlifemoments.ca/sitepages/obituary.asp?oid=1088788>); and staff from Surrey Place Centre (<https://www.surreyplace.ca/dr-tom-cheetham-dear-friend-and-valued-colleague/>).

References

- Developmental Disabilities Primary Care Initiative. (2011). *Tools for the primary care of people with developmental disabilities* (1st ed.). Toronto: MUMS Guideline Clearinghouse. Retrieved from <http://ddprimarycare.surreyplace.ca/tools-2/>
- Sullivan, W. F., Berg, J. M., Bradley, E., Cheetham, T., Denton, R., Heng, J., ... McMillan, S.; Colloquium on Guidelines for the Primary Health Care of Adults with Developmental Disabilities. (2011). Primary care of adults with developmental disabilities: Canadian consensus guidelines. *Canadian Family Physician*, 57, 541-553.
- Sullivan, W. F., Diepstra, H., Heng, J., Ally, S., Bradley, E., Casson, E., ... Witherbee, S. (2018), Primary care of adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities 2018 Canadian consensus guidelines, *Canadian Family Physician*, 64, 254-279.