

Monday Message, Monday, February 2, 2026

Inclusion: What does it mean? The Google AI answer is: Creating an environment where all individuals feel welcomed, respected, and valued, and can fully participate.

Consider reframing this: welcome, respect and value the other. The other: those who are not like us.

It is natural, and comfortable for us to want to hang around those who are similar to us, look like us, come from the same neighbourhood, the same school, dress in similar clothes. We often think about inclusion as including those whose skin is a different colour, come from a different country or our Indigenous people.

But it really goes beyond that when it comes to the workplace, especially in surgery. When we think about the qualities that describe a surgeon, what would we say? Although the culture has shifted dramatically since I started practice, I continue to be shocked when I hear comments about surgeons that have nothing to do with their clinical competence. I think this comes out in subtle ways particularly for women who may "show up" differently than men just like they do outside of surgery especially in leadership situations. I recently heard someone say that a senior woman leader was "not very warm and fuzzy." Really??? Did I get the job as Department Head because I am warm and fuzzy?

We are all different in some way. In social situations, it is understandable that we choose to hang out with those who share our interests or culture. At work, the most important things are our professionalism, and our clinical competence. Our ability to collaborate or work in teams and get along (collegiality) are also vital to the effective working of our divisions and our department in delivering high quality care.

I hope everyone is safe and warm from the latest storm.
Have a good week.

gail

Monday Message, Monday, February 9, 2026

The 2026 Olympic games opening ceremony was this past Friday. The theme for the games is "Armonia" or harmony in English. The original meaning means bringing together what is different. Kirsty Coventry, IOC president (the first woman president) gave an inspiring speech. She said " in my country we have a word: ubuntu. It means: I am because we are. That we rise by lifting others. That our strength comes from caring for each other. No matter where you come from, we all know this spirit – it lives and breathes in every community." At the Olympic games "athletes from every corner of the world compete fiercely – but they also respect, support and inspire one another. They remind us that we are all connected, that our strength comes from how we treat each other, and that the best of humanity is found in courage, compassion and kindness.”

A great message for all of us.

DOS executive report:

At our recent DOS executive meeting we discussed the ability of AFP surgeons to shadow bill for their work as a preceptor for medical students. FFS surgeons can bill directly for this work too. This requires that surgeons record the banner ID of the student and a generic HCN. Dr Gerard Corsten developed a document which is very clear and helpful as well as a sample billing sheet. I have attached it for your use. To facilitate this we will ask our education UG administrator to record the student information for you when you are assigned a medical student. This initiative will inform our DOS education deliverables and thereby make our contributions in this domain clear.

Physician recruitment is currently limited to replacements and TIPTOP. Requests for new FTE are not being considered at this time. We previously submitted business cases for 5 new FTE. These documents will be put forward again once we received permission to do so. Please let me know if you have any additional requests.

We are looking for a new Director of Education. Dr Gerard Corsten will complete his term as of March 31 2026. Please send an email to Lesli Smith if you are interested in applying for this important role. Dr Corsten has promised to remain available to shepherd us through Royal College Accreditation in November. I have met with all the Education Administrators and all divisions are in good shape for Accreditation with all documentation submitted to PGME. We await feedback from PGME but I don't anticipate any major problems.

We will be implementing two new standing committees in DOS: A Grand Rounds committee and a Communications Committee. The DOS Executive approved a change in approach for Grand Rounds to include more “generic” topics as well as specialty specific topics. The Communications committee will work on our monthly newsletter (you may have noticed we miss a month here and there) and our annual report. This work will continue to be supported by our IT consultant Marc Butler who not only provides the electronic templates and formatting but provides data as appropriate. Elaine Marsh in research, Lesli Smith our administrator and our Education Administrators also provide information and support. Final approval rests with the Department Head.

We are inviting anyone interested in these two committees to send an email to Lesli Smith.

Clinical and Academic Department Heads committee report:

This monthly meeting includes all Department Heads and DNS (Alana Patterson, Maureen Connolly and Shilo Mann). This month the discussion was focused on work done by PAMG to standardize departmental practice plans according to agreed upon principles. I am awaiting feedback on our Departmental Practice Plan document. Our Department differs from all others in that all divisions have their own practice plans and authority is decentralized. I don't anticipate any changes to this but will update you when I have further information.

Have a good week

gail

Monday Message, Tuesday, February 17, 2026

Gotta love 3 day weekends! Unless of course you are on call.

The extra day really helps whether it allows you to get away and go skiing or just pause and catch your breath.

It helps get us off the treadmill and take some time for our families and ourselves. This is really what wellness is about.

As we head back to work, it is worth remembering why we do what we do- to have a clear sense of our contribution, that what we do has value and that we are privileged to be able to make a difference in people's lives, to be entrusted with their life. Purposeful work that has value also supports wellness and prevents burnout. It is easy to forget this when there is so much noise going on around us.

We don't work in a perfect system, there are constraints that limit us in terms of delivery of care, and I know we would all like things to be better. All we really can do is just do our best for the patient who is in front of us given the situation we are in at this moment in time.

Have a good week,

gail

Monday Message, Monday, February 23, 2026

Did everyone watch the hockey final yesterday? Definitely not the outcome I was hoping for but winning a silver medal at the Olympics is nothing to be ashamed of. In my humble opinion Team Canada was the better team but the 3 on 3 is anybody's game-- just as it was for the women's team. I think the hockey games were not just about the sport but national pride and all the stuff from Trump and 51st state.

One thing I found especially impressive was how athletes from different countries competing against each other all celebrated with each other at the end of a ski run or snowboard event or speed skating. Amazing how we can unite through sport.

Speaking of team work-- the DGH ortho team completed 8 arthroplasties in a single room with a single surgeon and a single anesthesiologist and a dedicated team of nurses, MDR staff and environmental services.

Reducing turnovers was a key part of this but I also want to emphasize the importance of an experienced team where everyone knows the steps of the operation, what is next, and what is expected of them. This is a luxury not all surgeons experience. Congratulations to the DGH ortho team!

Have a good week
gail