

Alberta Doctors' Digest

AMA Medal for Distinguished Service 2022

The AMA Medal for Distinguished Service recognizes physicians who have made an outstanding personal contribution to the medical profession, to the people of Alberta and has contributed to the art and science of medicine while raising the standards of medical practice. For 2022, two of your colleagues were selected: Dr. James (Jim) Kellner and Dr. Christopher Wilkes.

Dr. James (Jim) Kellner received his medical training in Calgary and Toronto, specializing in pediatrics and infectious diseases. He is currently a clinician researcher at Alberta Children's Hospital and Professor of Pediatrics, Community Health Sciences, and Microbiology, Immunology and Infectious Diseases at the University of Calgary.

At every stage of his career, Dr. Kellner has taken leadership roles, as Chief Resident of Pediatrics at the Hospital for Sick Children and in Calgary as Royal College Program Director for Pediatric Infectious Diseases, Section Chief of Pediatric Infectious Diseases, Associate Director Institute of Maternal and Child Health, and Deputy Department Head for Research and Administration.

His greatest contributions came when he was head of the Department of Pediatrics at the University of Calgary and Calgary Zone of Alberta Health Services from 2008 to 2018. Under Dr. Kellner's leadership, the department grew dramatically, with the medical and scientific workforce increasing by more than 75%. In addition to his administrative and educational roles, he has maintained his clinical practice and an active research career.

He has been recognized for his services with numerous honours, including recent awards from the University of Calgary Department of Pediatrics (Advocacy and Leadership Award 2021), Alberta Children's Hospital Medical Staff (Physician of the Year 2017), Cumming School of Medicine (CME and Professional Development Top Teacher Award 2021), Pediatric Chairs of Canada (Appreciation Award for three years, as President in 2016 and COVID Leadership Award 2020), and American Academy of Pediatrics (Distinguished Service Award 2019).

Dr. Kellner has made innumerable contributions to pediatrics and infectious disease epidemiology throughout his career. For twenty years, including 10 as committee chair, he has been providing expertise and guidance for the province's vaccine policy as a member of what is now known as the Alberta Advisory Committee on Immunization. His commitment to rigorous evidence review, population health considerations and improving the health of Albertans has benefitted us all. During the past two years, working with the COVID-19 Analytics and Strategy Group, the COVID-19 Immunity Task Force (CITF), and the National Immunity Taskforce, his contributions have reached a new level, and we have all benefitted from his knowledge of how we could best respond to and control the impact of the pandemic.

To help meet the need for reliable, balanced and scientifically informed information among health professionals and the general public, Dr. Kellner has spoken at more than 60 local, provincial and national video-conferenced COVID-19 education events and has given nearly 200 media interviews.

He has remained focused on the health of children, leading efforts to assemble pediatric cohorts and trials across the country related to COVID-19, including vaccination trials, to ensure that the best Canadian science was contributing to the making of evidence-informed and timely decisions to minimize the harms of the pandemic on children.

Canadians are fortunate to have such a dedicated and expert clinician who gives so generously of his time and energy to ensure that children receive the best care possible.

Coming up in the next issue of Alberta Doctors' Digest:

Dr. Christopher Wilkes, Medal for Distinguished Service recipient