

## EDITORIAL

# Marla Shapiro, CM, MDCM, CCFP, MHSc, FRCPC, FCFP, NCMP 2016-2017 NAMS President

**D**r. Marla Shapiro was elected as the 2016-2017 President of The North American Menopause Society (NAMS) during the Society's 27th Annual Meeting held October 5-8, 2016, in Orlando, Florida. Dr. Shapiro succeeds Dr. Peter F. Schnatz as President and will serve a 1-year term.

Dr. Shapiro is Professor of Family and Community Medicine at the University of Toronto in Ontario, Canada. She is on staff at Mount Sinai, North York General Hospital, and the Toronto General Hospital, all in the Toronto area.

Dr. Shapiro completed medical school at McGill University in Montreal and trained at the University of Toronto for a Masters of Health Science in Community Health and Epidemiology. She has studied Family Medicine and is certified by the Canadian College of Family Physicians. She concluded her specialty training in Preventive Medicine and Public Health, receiving a Fellowship from the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada, and has been awarded an Honorary Fellowship from the College of Family Physicians of Canada. Dr. Shapiro has added certification as a NAMS Certified Menopause Practitioner to her already full curriculum vitae.

In addition to her medical responsibilities to her practice and the University, Dr. Shapiro is a medical journalist. She first started her on-air career in 1993 with City Television in Toronto and moved to CTV in 2000. Since 2000, she has been the Health and Medical Expert for *Canada AM*. She is seen regularly on the CTV News Channel and as the medical consultant on CTV National News. Dr. Shapiro has contributed topical, medical investigative documentaries for CTV's *W5*, Canada's most-watched documentary series. In 2003, she began hosting *Balance: Television for Living Well*, a daily health and lifestyle show seen across North America. In 2012, she hosted CTV News Channel's *Dr. Marla & Friends*, a weekly series examining the most current and news-driven medical topics and stories. Her health blog at CTV.ca is read internationally.

"My career has bridged both clinical medicine and reporting evidence-based medical news to the public," says Dr. Shapiro. "I have had a longstanding interest in women's health, firmly believing that it is critical to inform women with medical knowledge that is both understandable and useable. I can clearly recall being asked to give perspective in 2002 on a newly published study called the Women's Health Initiative. It has been an ongoing challenge to report the evidence as it has

evolved and help women to bridge the gap between science, which is often difficult to understand, and media, while keeping it evidence based and understandable."

Among her numerous international and national awards and recognitions, in 2015, Dr. Shapiro was awarded the McGill Alumni Global Community Service Award, presented to an alumnus who has made outstanding contributions to the betterment of local and global communities. In 2013, she was honored at the 150th Bayer Anniversary along with 22 leading scientists and researchers with the Outstanding Physician Recognition Award in Women's Health and Contraception. She was also named one of the Top 25 Most Powerful Women by *Women of Influence* magazine. In 2011, the Israeli Cancer Research Fund honored Dr. Shapiro with their Women of Action Award for her support of innovative cancer research. She was the recipient of the 2010 Peter R. Newman Humanitarian Award in recognition of her commitment to the welfare of individual persons or the community, at home or abroad. Dr. Shapiro received an Award of Excellence in 2008 from the College of Family Physicians of Canada for her lifelong dedication to Family Medicine. She also was awarded the Excellence in Creative Professional Activity award in 2008 by the University of Toronto, Department of Family and Community Medicine.

In 2015, Dr. Shapiro was named a member of the Order of Canada for contributions as a family physician and trusted source of health information. One of Canada's highest civilian honors, the Order of Canada is the cornerstone of the Canadian Honours System and recognizes outstanding achievement, dedication to the community, and service to the nation. "It was completely overwhelming to be named as a member to the Order of Canada and wholly gratifying to have the importance of knowledge translation be recognized, something each of us offers to our patients on a daily basis," says Dr. Shapiro.

In addition, Dr. Shapiro has been honored with many awards for her 2006 documentary, *Run Your Own Race*. The documentary was written, presented, and coproduced by Dr. Shapiro and has won numerous industry awards, including a Gold Medal REMI International Film Award at



the Houston International Film Festival and the Silver Physical Health and Medicine Columbus International Film and Video Award. She won the Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada/Canadian Foundation for Women's Health Award for Excellence in Women's Health Journalism for the documentary as well. Dr. Shapiro has written a best-selling book, *Life in the Balance: My Journey With Breast Cancer*, released in fall 2006.

"Dr. Shapiro's expertise as a clinician, communicator, and women's health specialist provides a unique synergy that enhances each of these roles," says Dr. Sheryl Kingsberg. "She has mastered the enormously difficult challenge of effectively educating the general public about complex medical concepts through her media presence. It takes a master educator and clinician to translate science and research findings into an understandable content for a nonmedical audience. Do not be fooled. The fact that Dr. Shapiro has mastered this and makes it look effortless is a testament to her skill. Her ability to deconstruct science into easy-to-understand concepts is a difficult skill that should be highly valued."

An Active Member of NAMS since 2001, Dr. Shapiro's contributions to the Society are numerous, including serving as a speaker at the Society's Annual Meeting and serving on the Editorial Board of *Menopause*. She has contributed as a member to several Society committees and task forces—Awards Committee, Professional Education Committee, Membership Committee, Scientific Program Committee, Consumer Education Committee (Chair in 2008), and the *MenoNote* Task Force. In recognition of her work in expanding the knowledge and understanding of menopause through a consumer-media outlet, Dr. Shapiro received the NAMS Media Award in 2005. She was appointed to the Board in 2011 and elected to a first term in 2014.

"As President, I will carry on with our mission of promoting health and quality of life for all women through midlife and beyond," says Dr. Shapiro. "I would like to expand our footprint as the foremost organization that health professionals and consumers alike can turn to for evidence-based information and guidelines in offering the best healthcare to women. In 2015, NAMS initiated filmed interview segments with our numerous international experts on women's health that can be viewed on the NAMS website. These segments seek to offer information on topics of concern to our

membership, and in 2016 and beyond, we will offer more of these opportunities to our members and consumers. I would like to bridge knowledge translation with the experts to further reach out to consumers who often find the rapidly changing landscape of women's health confusing. It is critical to separate anecdotes and claims from evidence and science."

In addition to NAMS, Dr. Shapiro is a member of several committees and advisory boards, including the Board for the Canadian Foundation for Women, and Health, and Research Canada. She was on the original Board of the Canadian Partnership Against Cancer, one of the first countries to answer the World Health Organization's call to action to develop a national strategy for cancer control, stepping down after 6 years. Dr. Shapiro is well known internationally for her expertise in education and communication, having been a speaker and panelist at many international meetings, including the International Menopause Society and the South African Menopause Society.

"I am thrilled to see Marla Shapiro assume the presidency of NAMS," says Past President Dr. Steven R. Goldstein. "The fact that she is Canadian and that she is a family physician speaks to the true diversity that is NAMS. But much more important than geography or medical specialty of origin, she is truly unique. I have known many high-profile 'media docs,' and most of them get very carried away with their celebrity. But not Marla. No, she has pursued academic excellence as well as anyone I know. In addition, she brings to the table a keen understanding and experience of the media and consumers, as well as excellent communication skills to her colleague healthcare providers. She is bright, energetic, and beyond competent. NAMS could not be in better hands."

Dr. Shapiro enjoys fitness and spending time with her family, both of which keep her grounded. "There is no question that work-life balance remains a challenge for all of us, but I believe having a passion for what we do allows us to find that balance. My supportive family, children, and now two grandchildren remind me on a daily basis about the importance of that work-life balance," says Dr. Shapiro. Her passion for international travel and education often finds her on a plane, so if you send her a note and it does not get answered in real time, it is likely because her smart phone is stranded on the tarmac.

*The Editors*