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## NEWS RELEASE

### CMPA'S NEW SUBSIDIARY SAEGIS AND THE UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO COLLABORATE ON SAFER OPIOID PRESCRIBING PROGRAM

**OTTAWA, September 5, 2017** — The Canadian Medical Protective Association (CMPA)'s recently-launched subsidiary Saegis, together with the University of Toronto's Faculty of Medicine, Continuing Professional Development (CPD) office are pleased to announce a new collaboration to make "Safer Opioid Prescribing, A Multimodal Program for Chronic Pain and Opioids" available to all clinicians in Canada. Increasing access to high quality continuing medical education has been identified as key strategy in addressing our country's opioid crisis.

The program is based on the most up-to-date knowledge captured in the *2017 Canadian Guideline for Opioids for Chronic Non-Cancer Pain*. It consists of a series of three live webinars and an in-person skills development workshop, and was developed without any pharmaceutical industry influence. It is aimed at assisting physicians in providing the appropriate management of chronic pain.

Program participants will:

- develop multi-modal approaches to complex chronic pain
- initiate and manage safe and effective opioid therapy
- prevent and address opioid use disorder
- develop communication and collaboration skills needed to manage opioid therapy for people living with chronic pain

Additional information about the program is available on the [University of Toronto's website](#) and on the [Saegis website](#).

"The CMPA and Saegis recognize that caring effectively for patients who have chronic, non-cancer pain is a complex challenge for physicians," said Dr. Hartley Stern, Executive Director and Chief Executive Officer of the CMPA and Chairperson of the Saegis Board. "Physicians have a responsibility to provide proper pain management, and are encouraged to take opioid education sessions to reduce their medical-legal risk and improve patient safety."

Management of opioids to treat chronic pain can present significant patient safety concerns and is an increasing medical-legal difficulty for Canadian doctors. Canada ranks only second to the United States in the per capita consumption of prescription opioids. In 2015, Canadian physicians wrote enough prescriptions for one in every two Canadians.

Between 2010 and 2015, the CMPA handled 151 medical-legal cases involving allegations of patient harm related to opioid prescribing. These cases mostly involved opioids prescribed for chronic pain. In these cases, most often physicians were criticized for their failure to assess patients appropriately for indications related to opioids. Inadequate assessments usually occurred at opioid initiation, prescription renewal, and when

increasing dosages. In some cases, the prescribing of opioids at the same time as other medications such as benzodiazepines and psychotropic medications has resulted in an increased rate of over sedation, respiratory failure and death.

“Having just observed International Overdose Awareness Day on August 31<sup>st</sup>, we are very pleased to jointly provide this course with Saegis to improve opioid prescribing,” said Dr. Suzan Schneeweiss, Associate Dean CPD. “Safer Opioid Prescribing has already supported more than 600 physicians to develop the knowledge, tools and skills to treat chronic non-cancer pain safely, effectively and compassionately. This innovative and award-winning program is amongst the first in the country to address the new 2017 Canadian Guidelines for Opioid for Chronic Non-Cancer Pain.”

“Saegis is committed to collaborating with Continuing Professional Development at the University of Toronto to facilitate safer opioid prescribing and improve patient care,” added Dr. Stern. “Supporting physicians as they provide care to patients is an important step in effectively addressing the opioid crisis.”

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**About the CMPA:**

The Canadian Medical Protective Association provides advice, legal assistance, and an extensive risk management education program to more than 95,000 physicians. It is the principal provider of medical liability protection in Canada and is governed by an elected council of physicians. As an essential component of the healthcare system, the CMPA is firmly committed to protecting the professional integrity of physicians and promoting safe medical care.

**About Saegis:**

Saegis offers specialized programs for physicians, healthcare professionals and institutions, and practice management solutions that extend beyond the CMPA's offerings. Customized to the needs of Canadian physicians and other healthcare professionals, healthcare teams, hospitals and clinics, Saegis' in-depth solutions enhance the safety of care, improve skills, reduce liability risks, and optimize practice management — all with the goal of improving overall patient care and contributing to a safe and sustainable healthcare system. Saegis is a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Canadian Medical Protective Association.

**About CPD:**

Continuing Professional Development is part of Post MD Education at the University of Toronto's Faculty of Medicine. With its global reputation of leadership and excellence in medical education, CPD is a strategic partner in transforming healthcare in Ontario and beyond. Its mission is to improve the health of individuals and populations through the discovery, application and communication of knowledge. Over 40 000 learners attend the more than 400 in-person and online programs and conferences offered per year. Learn more at [www.cpd.utoronto.ca](http://www.cpd.utoronto.ca)