
Board of Directors - Canadian Women in Medicine
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada

June 1, 2024

Canadian Medical Hall of Fame
100 Kellogg Lane, Unit 10
London, Ontario, N5W 0B4

Dear Selection Committee:

It is with great privilege and reverence that we nominate Dr. Jennie Kidd Trout to be posthumously inducted into the Canadian Medical Hall of Fame.

Dr. Trout was a pioneer for gender equity in the medical profession. As the first female physician to acquire medical licensure in Canada, she overcame adversity and paved the way for female physicians in Canada to have the confidence and the courage to pursue a career in medicine. Based on data published by the Canadian Medical Association, it is anticipated that as of the year 2030 over 50% of practicing Canadian physicians will be female (CMA 2023). Female physicians make irrefutable contributions to the health and wellness of Canadians. By demonstrating that it is both possible and plausible for women to practice and excel within the field of medicine, Dr. Trout is undoubtedly deserving of our utmost respect and recognition.

Dr. Trout was born in 1841 in Scotland but she moved to Ontario, Canada in 1847. In 1871, she began her pursuit of a career in medicine and was one of the first two females admitted to a medicine qualifying course at the Toronto School of Medicine. Dr. Trout passed her qualifying course in 1871 but unfortunately, at the time, no Canadian medical schools admitted females for formal medical training. This did not deter Dr. Trout. She traveled to the Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania and obtained her medical degree in 1875. She then moved back to Canada and later that year, on March 11, 1875 she passed the examinations of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario. She became the first licensed female physician in Canada.

The barriers faced by Dr. Trout are not insignificant. Anecdotally, Dr. Trout faced opposition and hostility from her male colleagues and professors in her medical qualifying course. Dr. Trout, however, persisted and passed her qualifying course. The inability to obtain a medical degree in Canada also did not stop Dr. Trout from pursuing her career ambitions. Despite not being able to obtain her degree in Canada, she returned to Canada after receiving her degree elsewhere to provide her expertise and service to the Canadian population. The tenacity of Dr. Trout to continue to pursue education and training in the face of blatant sexism and prejudice is both admirable and inspiring.

The triumphs of Dr. Trout are not limited to her efforts to challenge the patriarchy in Canadian medicine. Dr. Trout also demonstrated a commitment to professional conduct and standardized competencies. While not the first female to open a medical practice in Canada (this accomplishment belongs to Dr. Emily Stowe, 2018 CMHF Inductee), she was the first female to complete licensing exams and obtain licensure in her province of practice. This system of licensure and professional regulation remains the archetype of governance for medical practice in Canada today, demonstrating Dr. Trout's early commitment to certification and standardized proficiency. Additionally, once in practice, Dr. Trout had offered a free dispensary to those who could not afford to pay. This demonstrates a level of philanthropy and commitment to combating socioeconomic inequities. Dr. Trout also became an advocate for medical education for Canadian women. She had offered financial assistance to a planned medical school for women in Toronto contingent on the idea that women were allowed to teach there and would make up the majority of the board of trustees. This proposal was rejected so Dr. Trout went on to be involved in the creation of a women's medical college in Kingston, Ontario. This demonstrates commitment to principles and expanding equity. Finally, it is worth noting that Dr. Trout's accomplishments were achieved as an immigrant to Canada, which is important to recognize as we celebrate the diversity of our heritage.

The Canadian Women in Medicine (CWIM) Organization is dedicated to connecting and celebrating Canadian women physicians through mentorship, recognition, and advocacy. As the current Board of Directors, we view Dr. Trout's contribution to the landscape of Canadian healthcare and gender equality in medicine as worthy of the highest acknowledgement. In 2021, current Board member Dr. Liana Hwang founded Canadian Women Physicians' Day, which is celebrated each year on March 11 - the day of Dr. Trout's licensure. The day is a time to acknowledge the challenges faced by Canadian female physicians but also to celebrate the successes and advancements of Canadian women in medicine. The presence and achievements of Canadian female physicians were made possible by the efforts and accomplishments of Dr. Jennie Trout. It is for this reason that we put forth our unwavering nomination for her induction into the Canadian Medical Hall of Fame.