

## A Conversation with Valerie Doyon

### CSPA Committee Member: Affiliate Members, Breaking Barriers



#### Valerie Doyon MD

Educational Resource Developer

##### ***Why did you get involved with CSPA?***

I've been a writer for the CSPA for over three years. Back when I was a medical student, my mentor, Dr. Harry Liu, gave me the opportunity to write a 24-page handbook called *You and Your Derm*. It was a great experience that complemented my academic and medical writing skills. Although I love “nerding out” on the intricacies of complex dermatologic conditions, it's just as important for me to connect with my patients in a practical, relatable way-- breaking down complicated concepts into something easy to understand. Writing for the CSPA allows me to do just that.

##### ***What do you perceive as outcomes of your involvement?***

Through the CSPA, I get to write about real-life questions patients have-- like how to mentally prepare a child for a skin biopsy, reapply sunscreen over makeup, or make the most of a doctor's appointment. These are the kinds of practical concerns that often get overlooked in traditional medical literature. Not everything patients need to know is in a medical journal—the CSPA gives me a voice to talk about the things that matter to patients but don't always make it into textbooks. Helping patients one-on-one in clinic is incredibly fulfilling-- but through writing educational content for *SKIN* magazine, I can reach thousands of readers across Canada and make an even broader impact. It's deeply rewarding. Lastly, having a skin condition can be isolating, especially when it's visible and carries stigma. The CSPA creates a trusted space where patients can learn, connect, and feel seen. Because the content is developed alongside dermatologists and grounded in evidence, I often recommend the CSPA website as a go-to resource for my patients.

##### ***Why do you like volunteering with CSPA?***

To write well, I need to put myself in my patients' shoes. It deepens my empathy and helps me better understand the challenges patients face-- not only in managing their skin, but in navigating the healthcare system as a whole. Researching topics also deepens my knowledge, which ultimately helps me become a better clinician and future dermatologist.

##### ***Why would you tell others that they should get involved with CSPA?***

As dermatology residents, we do a lot of scientific and academic writing—but we don't always get to practice writing in plain language. Volunteering with the CSPA is a fun and meaningful way to do that. You really need to understand a topic well to explain it clearly and simply, and that skill is invaluable.

##### ***Has a personal connection with the skin patient community inspired your participation?***

Absolutely! I wouldn't be in dermatology if I hadn't experienced a host of my own skin, hair, and nail issues. From urticaria to infestations, my lived experience is what sparked my passion for dermatology and for writing about it in a way that supports others.