

# Ms. Murray goes to Geneva

June 3, 2016



For most people, the chance to represent their country on the world stage comes along once in a lifetime – if ever.

Maryann Murray earned the opportunity to do just that recently at the World Health Organization headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland.

Murray, a member of Patients for Patient Safety Canada, was invited to speak at a side event on medication safety during the World Health Assembly's annual meeting and to represent the patient perspective. She also shared the "[Five Questions to Ask about your Medications](#)," with the assembly as an example of a made-in-Canada tool that will save lives.

## News

The World Health Assembly is the governing body of the World Health Organization and is comprised of the Health Ministers from member states. They meet every year in May for five days.

From walking the halls of the Palace of Nations and seeing the peacocks roaming the grounds, to watching representatives from across the globe come together with the goal of improving healthcare worldwide, Murray describes the experience as surreal. Despite the goings-on around her, however, Murray was there with one goal in mind.

"I agreed to take part in this meeting because I know we can do better and I wanted to encourage others to take action," Murray says. "Having lost a child to an adverse drug reaction, I want to do what I can to help reduce similar events. I agreed to attend because I wanted to underline the importance and urgency of improving medication safety. Improving medication safety will save lives."

Maryann's daughter Martha died in 2002, after a series of errors. She since joined Patients for Patient Safety Canada with a desire to ensure what happened to Martha doesn't happen to anyone else.

"One of the speakers suggested that ways must be found to increase reporting, perhaps through incentives," Murray says. "A physician in the audience responded to this comment by suggesting that the best reward for reporting would be feedback."

"Wouldn't it be great if national reporting of adverse reactions became the norm, as well as regular newsletters showing data analysis, trends and early warnings?" she says, hopeful that her words left an impression on those in attendance.

Murray says she was thrilled to see the patient's perspective given so much credence and walked away inspired by the feeling that so many influential people were focused on finding ways to improve medication safety.

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