During its first meeting held on 3rd March 2006 a number of doctors, who had received training in the previous three modules organised by the Malta College of Family Doctors in collaboration with the Royal College of General Practitioners, met together to officially set up the Family Medicine Teachers Group.

**Doctors:** Jurgen Abela, Diane Balzan, Jason Bonnici, Michael Borg, Ron Borg, Anton Bugaja, Noel Caruana, Doreen Cassar, Savior Cilia, Josianne Cutajar, Patricia Degabriele, Sandra Falzon Camilleri, Pierre Mallia, Anthony Mifsud, Mark Rosso, Daniel Sammut, Mario Sammut, Philip Scioritto, Zaid Teibi, Jean Karl Soler, Andrew Zammit, and Vincent Zammit showed their interest and commitment to cooperate together to improve the quality of General Practice/Family Medicine teaching in Malta.

The main issues dealt with so far by the teachers group include the setting up and preliminary preparations for the developing of the Vocational Training programme. The group has come up with a number of propositions which have been forwarded to the college council for representation to the Health Department. The College is awaiting a response from the department of Health on these issues, which were also discussed during an official meeting between the Director of Primary Care and College officials.

The aim of the TG is not restricted only to VT programme, but also seeks to participate in the unfolding of the Continued Medical Education programme of the college and a number of Teachers are involved in the teaching of the Diploma in Family Practice which was launched by the college in November 2005.

The College Council through the hard work of Dr Mario Sammut has managed to secure European Funds for organising the fourth module of the Teachers Course which focussed on Mentoring and appraisal Skills. These skills are a must in the organisation of the vocational training so as to ensure a reputable standard of teaching and assessment of our future family doctors. During a five day intensive course, organised between 27th June and 1st July 2006, twenty family doctors participated in an interactive course which included modelling of actual teaching, tutorials and mentoring sessions with the participation of three newly recruited trainees. The course was organised by Professor Rosslyrne Freeman and Dr Marek Jezerski from the Royal College of General Practitioners in collaboration with the Malta College of Family Doctors and was mostly funded through the European Social Fund.

The Teachers group has been ensuring that its members have the necessary preparation and skills and is eager to embark on the ambitious and demanding Vocational Training programme. However it has still to enter into fruitful collaboration with authorities from the Department of Health as much depends on the department to return the goodwill which has so far been mostly unilateral.
Some comments from the participants at the course:

"Change is here and nobody can stop it from taking place. Future GPs (Trainees) of Malta already consider themselves as belonging to an important medical speciality and this empowers me and fills me with enthusiasm."

"The teachers' group has gained the expertise and should influence change towards the proper and rightful direction."

"We worked as one group with one common aim. The group wants to succeed, and its members can and will work together to make this happen. Marek and Ros are excellent teachers and group leaders. They were ready to change the agenda of the entire course to address the issues we had. This was an example of learner centered teaching, we picked it up and made it our own (and showed we could do it) and our trainees loved it."

"An empowering experience both on a personal level and for the medical profession. I can hardly remember in a decade as a medical doctor, of an activity that left so large an impact. It is a pity that basic skills applicable for general practice had to wait so long to be taught".

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Malta College of Family Doctors

July 2006  Presentation of membership certificates (MMCFD) to College Members. The ceremony will be followed by a gala dinner at the Radisson SAS Baypoint on the 28th July at 8:30pm

July-August 2006  Election for new College Council

August 2006  Wonca Europe: 12th Regional Conference. Towards Medical Renaissance - Bridging the gap between Biology & Humanities. Florence, Italy 27th-30th August

September 2006  Community Orientation in General/Family Practice. The 15th Bled Course will be held in Bled, Slovenia, on 19-23rd September 2006.