

# MALTA COLLEGE OF FAMILY DOCTORS

## HON. SECRETARY'S REPORT OF COLLEGE ACTIVITIES 1999-2000

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### 1. Council meetings:

In the first Council meeting after the AGM of 29/4/99, Dr F P Calleja was welcomed to the College Council. Dr W Galea was proposed, and accepted, to return as International Secretary instead of Dr Busuttil.

Nineteen meetings were held since the last AGM of 29/4/99. Eleven of these meetings (1st May, 9th June, 30th June, 5th July, 14th July, 27th July, 4th August, 23rd September, 21st October 1999, 3rd January 2000, 29th February 2000) were devoted to the 6th Mediterranean Medical Congress. Council members' attendance was as follows:

M R Sammut	19	J G Pace	17
F P Calleja	19	W Galea	17
D Soler	18	J K Soler	16
M A Borg	18	A Mifsud	14
A P Azzopardi	18	J P Gauci	7
P Sciortino	18		

### 2. 6th Mediterranean Medical Congress:

A Preliminary Announcement was distributed at a College stand during the WONCA 1999 Meeting in Mallorca, Spain, during May 1999. On the 9th June 1999, after presentations by two conference organisers, the College Council decided to provisionally select Howard's Travel, confirming such decision on the 5th July. On the latter date, the Westin Dragonara Resort was chosen as the conference venue. On the 27th July, Dr D Soler presented the signed agreements with the Mediterranean Medical Society and with Howard's Travel. On the 30th July, the University Rector, Dr R Ellul Micallef, was invited and

accepted to be a keynote speaker. On the 4th August, the design of the Congress poster was presented and accepted by Council, who also accepted a proposal by Webcraft to host the Congress website. On the 21st October, Dr J G Pace was appointed Senior Chairman of the Congress, and Dr J K Soler was confirmed as Chairman of the Organising Committee, with Dr P Sciortino, Dr M A Borg and Dr A Mifsud as Chairmen of the Scientific, Hospitality and Finance Committees respectively. The 2nd Announcement was published at the end of March 2000, and subsequently distributed.

### 3. CPD Activities:

- **Autumn 1999 CPD Meeting (6-8 October 1999): Information Technology in Family Practice:**
  - *Wednesday 6th October:* Information Technology in Medical Education - Dr P Sciortino;
  - *Thursday 7th October:* The Use of the Internet in Family Practice - Dr H Agius Muscat & Dr W Galea;
  - *Friday 8th October:* TRANSHIS - a Computerised Medical Record for Family Practice in Malta - Dr J K Soler.Sponsors: Biosphere and Servier.
- A CPD meeting was held in collaboration with the Malta Hospice Movement on the 3rd

November 1999, entitled '**When not to use morphine**' with Dr Victor Pace, Consultant in Palliative Care, as speaker.

- On behalf of the College, Dr P Sciortino introduced the afternoon workshop for family doctors at the **First Maltese Conference on Infection Control and Antibiotic Therapy** on 6th November, which was held in association with the College (which also provided accreditation).
- The College granted accreditation to a **Conference on Bioethical Issues** held on the 24-26/11/99 at the Medical School, G'Mangia.
- A **Sports Medicine Seminar on Lower Limb Biomechanics and Associated Injuries** was held by the Medical Commission of the Malta Olympic Committee on 26th - 28th November 1999 in association with the Malta College of Family Doctors, with appropriate accreditation granted for participating family doctors.
- The **Winter CPD Meeting** was held on 26-28 January 2000 at Farsons, Mriehel, with refreshments kindly sponsored by the latter. The meeting was entitled '**The Evolving Role of Occupational Health in Malta**', with the programme as follows:
  - *26th January 2000:* An Overview of the Work of a Company Doctor - Dr D Soler  
An Overview of the Work of a Company Nurse - Ms N Caruana  
An Engineer's View of Occupational Health - Ing. J P Sammut

- *27th January 2000:*  
Sickness Leave Parameters - Dr J G Pace  
Review of a Database of Company Visits over 3 years - Dr J K Soler
- *28th January 2000:*  
An Economic Evaluation of a Company Occupational Health Service - Dr P Sciortino  
The National Occupational Health Structure: An Official View of the Role of the Company Doctor - Dr M Gauci
- A **Workshop on Computer Literacy**, which was to be organised for the College by Mr Anthony Sultana at De La Salle College on the 29th January 1999, had to be cancelled due to lack of participants.
- A lecture on **medical anthropology** was held at the Medical School on March 28th 2000 by Prof. Murray Last in collaboration with the University of Malta and the College.
- The **Spring CPD Meeting** on 'Fertility Issues in Family Medicine' was held on 10-12 May 2000 with the following programme:  
Wednesday: The oral contraceptive - Mr D Felice, Case presentations & discussion - Dr P Degabriele.  
Thursday: Contraception without the OCP - Mr G Buttigieg, Case presentations & discussion - Dr M Rizzo Naudi.  
Friday: The childless couple - Prof. M Brincat, Male Infertility - Dr J Vassallo.  
Sponsors were Pro-Health and Synthelabo.
- In April 2000, the Sports Medicine Subcommittee of the Malta Spots Council requested the College's collaboration and accreditation for a **Sports Medicine Conference** due to be held on the 9-11 June 2000.

#### 4. Local news:

- In May 1999, the Faculty Board of Medicine and Surgery

unanimously approved the setting up of a **Department of Family Medicine**. This was subsequently confirmed by the University Senate on the 11th November 1999, and by the University Council on the 17th February 2000.

- The **EGPRW International Course on Research Methods in Primary Care** was hosted successfully by the College on 3-7 June 1999 at the Forum Hotel, St Andrew's.
- In June 1999, it was announced that the **Patients' Charter** had been translated into Maltese and put up on the College website. A leaflet with versions in Maltese and English was printed through a sponsorship by BUPA (Malta) in February 2000 and publicised by a press release.
- In June 1999, Dr M R Sammut was invited to represent the College in a parliamentary sub-committee discussing "**Mental Health: policies, structures, services and legislation**". Dr Sammut explained the College's opinion that, for the Mental Health Reform in the Community to succeed, primary care needs to be reformed in line with the College's Policy Document.
- Dr P Sciortino and Dr M R Sammut held an initial meeting on 17th August with Dr R Busuttil, Director General (Health), regarding the introduction of a 3-4 year course in **Vocational Training in Family Medicine**. Dr R Busuttil subsequently prepared a draft memo on the subject and referred it to the College for its comments before submission. Such programme was approved with amendments during a subsequent meeting on 28/1/2000 between the Director General (Health), the Medical Association of Malta and the College (represented by D Soler, M R Sammut and P

Sciortino). During this meeting the DG(H) accepted that the Health Division sponsors a **Trainers' Course** organised by the College as part of such programme.

- In a letter dated 16th September 1999, Dr Frank Portelli, CEO and Director of **St Philip's Hospital**, agreed to renew the hospital's support and commitment to the College for 3 years commencing on the 1st January 2000.
- Dr M R Sammut represented the College at a follow-up **Seminar on the Draft Mental Health Act** held by the National Mental Health Commission on the 26th October 1999.
- Dr M R Sammut and Dr A Mifsud represented the College at a **meeting** organised on the 28th October 1999 by the Medical Association of Malta regarding **issues related to EU accession**. Dr A Mifsud and Dr F P Calleja were subsequently nominated to represent the College on an Academic Associations' Committee for EU Accession.
- In November 1999, the Council agreed that the **College membership fee** be raised (for the first time in 10 years) to Lm 15 as from 2000.
- The College **10th Anniversary Dinner** was held at the Coastline Hotel, Salina on the 9th December 1999, with the Minister of Health, the Director General (Health), the Dean of the Medical School and the CEO of St Philip's Hospital as the College's guests.
- The College was invited by the Director General (Health) in December 1999 to nominate a representative to a working group being set up to plan a **National Antibiotic Campaign**. Dr A Mifsud was chosen as such representative.

- **Transhis** was launched during a one-day workshop on the 5th February 2000 at the Forum Hotel, St Andrew's, with 12 doctors prepared to use the programme. Another 5 doctors accepted to use the programme after a second workshop on the 26th February. Prof H Lamberts and Dr I Okkes are to visit in June 2000 to assess progress and provide advice on the programme's use.
- Dr J G Pace chaired a workshop on 'Health Care in the Community' during the conference organised by the Foundation for Medical Sciences and the Forum Group entitled '**A National Agenda for sustainable Health Care in Malta**' on 18-20 February 2000.
- During March 2000, the College Council recommended that a peer-review system be introduced for the **College Journal** 'It-Tabib tal-Familja'.
- In March 2000, the College wrote a letter of congratulations to the new President of the **Medical Council**, and requested that GPs have a dedicated representative and that voting be performed by postal ballot. On 12th April, Dr D Soler announced that the Medical Council had rejected the College's two recommendations.
- Dr J G Pace, Dr P Sciortino and Dr A Azzopardi represented the College at a meeting on the 24th March 2000 set by the Director General (Health) with various associations to discuss **legislation changes to the Medical and Kindred Professions Act**.
- Dr F P Calleja was appointed in March 2000 as College representative to the **Breast Care Support Group** committee.
- In March 2000, the Council accepted an invitation through Dr M R Sammut from

**EUROPREV** to participate in a **study on GPs' views re health promotion**, and accepted Dr Sammut's suggestion that this be held in collaboration with the Health Promotion Department for support with mailing.

- In April 2000, the College collaborated with the Health Promotion Department in this year's **Quit & Win 2000** smoking cessation campaign, by means of a joint letter to family doctors.

#### 5. International news:

- A College delegation made a strong showing at the **WONCA Meeting in Palma de Mallorca**, Spain on 19-22 May 1999, with Dr D Soler and Dr M R Sammut representing the College in a WONCA Europe Council Meeting; Dr M R Sammut making a presentation on 'Tobacco Control in Malta', co-chairing a workshop on cardiovascular diseases and representing the College in a EUROPREV Closed Meeting; Dr J K Soler participating in an ICPC Meeting and reviewing posters for EGPRW; Dr A Mifsud representing the College in a EGPRW Closed Meeting; Dr P Sciortino representing the College in a EURACT Closed Meeting; and Dr W Galea actively participating with Dr J K Soler in a Medical Informatics Meeting. Moreover, Dr C Sammut and Mrs M Soler took care of a College stand promoting the 6th Mediterranean Medical Congress to be hosted by the College in September 2000.
- On 5-6 November 1999, Dr M R Sammut, the College delegate to EUROPREV, participated in the **First Closed Meeting of EUROPREV Delegates** in Barcelona, and was appointed to the **Coordinating Board of EUROPREV**.
- Dr P Sciortino represented the College in a **EURACT Meeting** in Israel during March 2000.

- In March 2000, the Council chose College President Dr D Soler and Secretary for Ethics Dr A P Azzopardi as its representatives to the **WONCA Europe Meeting in Vienna** during 2-6 July 2000.
- During a **EGPRW Meeting** in Maastricht in May 2000, Dr A Mifsud represented the College and Dr J K Soler presented a paper.
- Dr M R Sammut will be representing EUROPREV as a WHO temporary advisor in the above **WHO CINDI Programme Directors meeting** due to be held in Malta on 9-10 June 2000. The meeting will be discussing the area of smoking prevention in health professionals.

#### 6. Membership and Accreditation:

- Seven College members failed to pay their 1999 subscription fee by the end of October 1999 despite repeated reminders. As such, these were **deleted from the College register** as per Council decision of 13/9/94.
- **Membership at present stands at 126.**
- **45 College members were accredited for 1999**, 20 of which have maintained their accreditation status for the nine consecutive years since 1991.

#### 7. College Journal and Newsletter:

- Three issues of the College Journal (December 1998 and June & December 1999) were published since the last AGM. The Newsletter continues to be sent on a regular basis exclusively to College members, with local and international news of special interest to family doctors.

18th May 2000