

## Global Alliance for Medical Education - Meetings Archive

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### 2004 Meeting Report

#### Keynote Address: Global Health Challenges to Continuing Medical Education

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NEW YORK -- Globalization has both positive and negative effects on healthcare, said Yank D. Coble, Jr., MD, President, World Medical Association (WMA), Helsinki, and Chicago, Illinois, here during his keynote address to attendees of the Ninth Annual Meeting of the Global Alliance for Medical Education here.

On the plus side, "the development of the Internet and technology has been a terrific advance, making it possible for us to communicate rapidly," Dr. Coble said. On the other hand, diseases like AIDS and malaria can now travel from Outer Mongolia to the United States in 24 hours.

With increasing globalization, it's critical to examine how prepared the medical community is to respond to disasters. "It's very important to get information out to physicians and healthcare professionals as quickly as possible," Dr. Coble said.

There are many excellent lessons to be learned from the SARS epidemic, Dr. Coble said. For instance, China concealed the epidemic, only admitting the problem after a distinguished Chinese physician blew the whistle, thus enabling China to receive aid from the WMA and other international agencies. On the other end of the spectrum, Canada responded rapidly to its SARS problem.

As for the U.S., when the anthrax threat surfaced following the Sept. 11, 2001 tragedy, the public was eager for information--there were more than 200,000 additional hits on the American Medical Association's (AMA) web site in the first 24 hours after the threat was reported by the media, he said. However, the medical education community was not prepared.

"The CME we had available was not satisfactory," Dr. Coble said. To remedy the problem, the WMA, in cooperation with the AMA, held a conference on international disaster preparedness and terrorism. As a result, a curriculum on basic and advanced disaster life support has now been designed, Dr. Coble said.

As for the future, Dr. Coble noted that it is important to develop universal criteria for medical education and CME.