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2005 Meeting Report **CME from 160° West to 160° East** ***Project Globe Aims to Empower Front-line Physicians***

NEW YORK -- CME/CPD can be an effective tool in reaching the goals outlined in the United Nations Millennium Declaration 2000 and Mexico 2004, which include eradicating extreme hunger and poverty, reducing child mortality, improving maternal health, and combating HIV/AIDS and other diseases, said Pablo Pulido, MD, Co-Chair, Project Globe; Executive Director, Pan American Federation of Medical Schools, Caracas, Venezuela.

Generalist doctors provide most first-line care to the world's population, but their access to CME/CPD varies widely. "There is a need to harmonize efforts to improve CME/CPD quality in a world-wide partnership with medical schools and health care systems," said Dr. Pulido, in a session here during the Tenth Annual Meeting of the Global Alliance for Medical Education.

The vision of Project Globe is to impact global health by making evidence-based CME and CPD opportunities available to family and general practitioners. To achieve that goal, Project Globe plans to create a template to analyze problems and propose solutions for generalists' medical education, and develop a database of best practices in CME/CPD accreditation and certification.

WONCA Wins the World

One of the organizations that will participate in Project Globe is WONCA, the World Organization of Family Doctors. Eighty-two percent of the world population is now covered by a WONCA member organization, said Bruce Sparks, MD, Steering Committee Member, Project Globe; World President, WONCA. The newest members are Russia and Iraq.

WONCA provides many services for physicians, including weekly journals, news alerts, and a newsletter. A list of congresses scheduled through 2014 is posted on its Web Site. Global alerts provide members with a list of relevant journal articles and references that have been chosen by WONCA's editorial team.

"Our approach is that family practitioner organizations globally have been doing excellent CME up to now," said Dr. Sparks. WONCA's mission meshes with Project Globe's, as it focuses on improving the quality of healthcare through optimizing practitioners' expertise. While CME is one vehicle to improve quality, in order for it to be effective, local family practitioners must own the process, define the issues, and tailor interventions to meet their needs, said Dr. Sparks.

Project Globe Gathers International Inventory

It is gratifying that Project Globe was actually hatched at the 2004 GAME meeting, said R. Mark Evans, PhD, Director, Healthcare Education, American Medical Association, Chicago; President, GAME; and Steering Committee Member, Project Globe.

Evans discussed the goals of Task Force II: Effective CME/CPD, Delivery Methods and Resources Available. The task force will study the availability and effectiveness of current CME and CPD activities. To do this the task force will: identify and collate existing surveys of available CME resources and delivery methods that are most useful and appropriate for various generalist physician audiences. It will also develop an inventory of available CME/CPD activities, opportunities, and modalities for each country or region.

"I don't think any of us presume to know what's the best offering of CME to different countries," said Evans. "I think that our first cut at this is to at least look at evidence-based, valid CME programs that we could put into some type of database."

The task force will recommend an organizational base or platform that could be used to distribute quality CME/CPD activities, including the assessment of facilities needed by the end user. In addition, the task force will consider incentives for physician participation in CME/CPD activities.

Cost is a big factor in CME delivery, Evans added. The task force will need to identify low-cost options, such as wireless programs -- especially since a number of countries have advanced wireless technology.

Project Globe: A Partnership

"Project Globe is a partnership and we're delighted that WONCA is participating along with others," said Dennis Wentz, MD, Principal, Wentz, Miller and Associates, Beaver Creek-Avon, Colorado; Co-chair, Project Globe. "This is not a one-organization deal. It can't work unless it's a group."

Educating family practitioners is crucial, said Dr. Wentz, because "I'm firmly convinced that general practice is the answer to a lot of the issues that confront us-for instance, the health needs of an aging population. The front-line doctors deal with communicable and non-communicable diseases, obesity and smoking and others. If we're successful in enabling front-line doctors, we're going to bring clarity and help reduce inequities in healthcare, which exist all over the world, including in the United States."

Dr. Wentz, like Dr. Evans, also underscored the importance of making low-cost CME available. "We will assist in addressing some of the problems of cost by providing connections between people and doctors on a more consistent and reliable basis," he said.