

MSD donation to Family Health Foundation

Developing a Model

- *John A Smith*

On behalf of the SA Academy of Family Practice/Primary Care, I would like to thank MSD, once again, for another donation of R10 000 towards our Family Health Foundation.

It will be utilised to further Vocational Training for family practitioners, both in the public and private sectors. Vocational Training is that vital key to effective health care, as more and more countries are at last realising. To be uneconomical, especially in these times, is to be unethical.

I do not believe it is your responsibility or ours to finance our health services, but I do believe we have a right and a responsibility for setting up models, a yardstick against which present and future practices, whether they are in the public, private or academic spheres, can measure their performance and all can learn.

Today, the keyword is teamwork and the Academy in association with relevant health authorities, commerce, and industry - companies like yourself - have been 'Partners in Health' and are showing the direction we must take.

I believe this is an appropriate occasion to give an account of our

activities. In the space of a few years the Academy has grown to become the biggest academic body of any one medical discipline in the country, because it has fulfilled the unmet needs of our colleagues.

The young doctors wishing to enter family practice/primary care want and require training for the job - Vocational Training - for the same reasons as their specialist colleagues. It is as simple and as obvious as that, and in this country, it has become a reality due to the initiative of my Academy colleagues, the support of company like yourselves and the provision of posts by the relevant health authorities.

We have initiated, or are in the process of initiating Vocational Training in KwaZulu, Ciskei, the Eastern and Western Cape and in areas associated with university family medicine departments of our medical schools.

We are also looking into the feasibility of setting up a model practice in a new and underdoctored area of the Cape Peninsula - and are looking for partners in health! If we go ahead with it, your support today will be one of the reasons for that action.

I am often accused of being obsessed with the future. I do not apologise because you and I are going to spend the rest of our lives there!

I have said that family practice vocational training is the vital key to effective health services, because the family practitioner is the co-

ordinator of the health team. The family practitioner has been described as that vital factor in the concrete which holds society together. They are the leaders and policy makers of their communities.

What is family practice?

It is that branch of medicine where over 90% of the medical action takes place each day and where 90% of the problems can be resolved simply, effectively and inexpensively if there are well-trained health professionals providing comprehensive, continuing and personal care as opposed to the fragmented and episodic care that is often given in the outpatient departments of hospitals, at great expense. Hospitals and specialist services are expensive and often highly technical, consequently it is important that they are appropriately and properly used by the referral of patients for relevant reasons, and that through 'shared care' with other health professionals continuing care is given.

Medical education is a continuum, from the selection of medical students to retirement. South Africa is not an underdoctored country. There is one doctor for approximately 1 500 of the population but while 50% of the population live in rural areas only 5% of doctors practise there.

Therefore our main problem is not producing more doctors, but as 80% of the population is black, a more appropriate selection of medical students is required with an open university policy. As you have probably noted, the Academy's Family Health Foundation is dedicated to promoting family health and supporting health services, particularly in the underdoctored areas of our country.

I believe we have been a catalyst, with our specialist colleagues, in the



Dr Donald J Allen, managing director of MSD (Pty) Ltd, presents Dr John Smith of the Academy of Family Practice/Primary Care with a cheque for R10 000 at Merck Sharp & Dohme Park.

new, comprehensive approach to health that was recently announced. I know our 'blue print' for a national vocational training scheme is being investigated to see how it can be implemented.

Leaders in the business sector have publicly acknowledged a total commitment to pursue an active role in practising corporate responsibility.

We believe that the support of pharmaceutical companies, like yours, is a very tangible and meaningful way to become involved in the birth and development of a new era of health care delivery in South Africa to meet the future needs of all our people.

To quote Sir Winston Churchill, who could always sum up a situation:

'If the human race wishes to have a prolonged and indefinite period of material prosperity, its members have only to behave in a peaceful and helpful way towards each other,

and science will do for them all they wish and more than they can ever dream'.

I believe your company and ourselves are playing a meaningful role in bringing that wish to reality.



Keith Dennie, manufacturing superintendent, explains the manufacturing process of Aldomet tablets on the synoptic control panel, to the Southern Transvaal Committee.

Application for Membership of the Academy of Family Practice/Primary Care SA

I, (full names)
am a registered medical practitioner on the Register of the South African Medical & Dental Council and practice in the field of general practice/primary care. I hereby apply to become a member of The South African Academy of Family Practice/Primary Care. I support the objectives of the Academy and agree to pay the subscription fees and to abide by the Constitution of the Academy.

Enclosed, a cheque for R20,00 Registration fee
R30,00 Annual subscription
Total R50,00

Signature:

Qualifications:

Date of Qualification:

Postal address:

Please post to: The SA Academy of Family Practice/Primary Care,
Rooms 24/25, Medical House,
Central Square,
PINELANDS 7430.

For further enquiries contact Rose Jonker, tel no (021) 538205

