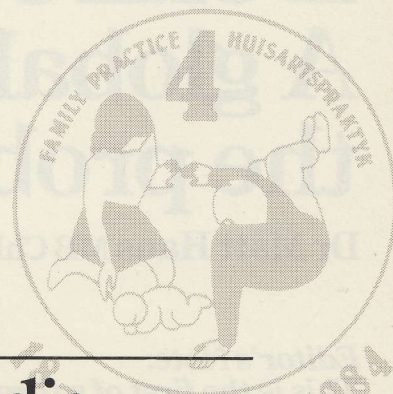


4th General Practitioners Congress

Maharani & Elangeni Hotels – Durban



**From the
Editor**

**Van die
Redakteur**

THIS is our Congress Edition of *SA Family Practice*. Together with the General Practitioner Group of MASA, the Academy of Family Practice/Primary Care is holding the 4th biennial GP Congress. These congresses have done much for us as a group.

It has been a meeting place where we could listen to papers presented by one another, rather than by experts from other fields. This has done much towards re-establishing self-respect in a group denied meaningful access in most medical schools in South Africa. The congresses have been a focal point for the academic growth of our discipline. We wish the organisers and participants of this Durban Congress similar, and even greater success!

In this issue, we pay tribute to Wolfgang Bodenstern who stood for two things that the Academy and this Congress also wish to foster. They are the development of primary care in all its forms to its full potential; and respect and good communication between people. The latter principle will come under discussion when we look at the general practitioner/specialist relationship, also discussed by van den Berg in this issue. Any relationship depends on both sides, having firstly self-respect (being comfortable with oneself) and then respect for one another. May this result from our discussions.

Presently the de Villiers commission is looking at the future needs for medical education in South Africa. If primary care is to find its rightful place within geographical and financial reach of every person in the country, we will have to contribute to the discussion, not only of the said commission, but also to that of the Medical Association and the Browne Commission.

Without an explicit national policy regarding Primary Health Care with a concomitant commitment and appropriate response from our medical schools, there can be no health care of adequate quality for all in Southern Africa. Both the structure of the service and the training of doctors and all health care workers will have to adapt and evolve at a rapid rate if we are going to cope with the health care needs of today and tomorrow.

One of the greatest blocks to progress is often found in our professionalism. Its natural conservatism and protectionism is perhaps at its height in such powerful bodies as Faculty Boards of Medical Schools and the SA Medical Council. May they have the desire and wisdom to respond positively to the results of present commissions of enquiry in progress. We hope they will all come with innovative and radical remedies, where necessary, to redress the imbalance in our health care service and teaching, weighted against primary care/general practice/family practice.