

# Building Capacity

By A/Prof Cheong Pak Yean, President, CFPS

This edition of the Mirror focuses on the capacity building processes of the College. It is also the maiden effort of the second editorial team invited to augment our editorial resources.

GDFM 'Teachers Awards '04'(Pg 5) were presented in this year's Commencement to 18 doctors with Masters in Family Medicine(FM) for their role in mentoring the GDFM trainees for 2 years or more. Fifty new doctors passed the GDFM exam held in July(Pg 8,15) thus further increasing the pool of vocationally trained family physicians in Singapore. GDFM also took centre-stage in this year's Annual General Meeting when the house unanimously endorsed the Memorandum to the Ministry of Health recommending that the GDFM be the minimum standard for independent practice of FM in Singapore.(Pg 7)

The Special Interest Groups (SIGs) are also creating an impact. The Mental Health and Elder Care SIGs continue to organize robust activities as reported in pgs 12 & 13. The 3rd & latest SIG set up, the 'Practice & Quality' SIG convened with a renowned international expert as keynote speaker. It will focus its attention

on the four dimensions of practice quality viz. clinical standards, care experience, cost-effectiveness & equity as well as what each dimension means to the 4 stakeholders viz. the physicians, the patients, the payers and the policy-makers.

In the run-up to the World Conference of WONCA 2007 which the College would host, literally hundreds of academic papers from all over the world would have to be adjudicated for presentation & publication. Increased capacity in research methodology (Pgs 17-19) is therefore important. The inaugural tutorial of the collegiate membership by assessment programme (Pg 8) is also an on-going effort to train more leaders for the College.

In the midst of these hustle and bustle, one family physician in his personal reflections (Pg 9) alludes the present situation to be like that of a taut spring not yet sprung. Which direction would these built-up positive energies lead to? Prof John Wong's advice in his keynote at the Commencement '04 is that 'we must not only ensure that we are educated, but relevant to Singapore's need'. The College agrees wholeheartedly. However, more than the College's capacity building effort is needed (Pg 7)

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## "A journey of a thousand miles starts with the first step"

—ancient Chinese saying

The Commencement Ceremony 2004 takes centre stage in this issue. It heralds a new beginning for some of us who have taken the 1st step towards professional development(PD) & learning. Borrowing A/Prof Cheong Pak Yean's favourite "peak & valley" analogy, we must "fill up the valleys of ignorance with 'earth' from the mountain peaks of knowledge" in order to 'cover all bases' as we proceed along this journey of learning. Practising what we preach, hence the heading of "Translating Preaching into Practice" form the gist of Prof John Wong's message for us, trainees & teachers alike, in his opening address at this year's ceremony.

The Teachers' Awards 2004 provided an occasion where we "stop and smell the flowers" along this road of learning, an opportunity to show our appreciation to those of us who chose to contribute by sharing their experience & wisdom.

This issue of College Mirror(CM) also put on record some "firsts" in College's history. The 9 GDFM graduates, enrolling as the pioneer batch of the MCFP by Assessment programme, & the use of video as an aid to teaching & assessment are just 2 examples that illustrate the College's role in the PD of all Family Physicians in Singapore.

Do not dismiss the AGM report, pay particular attention to the appendix; I am sure it will raise a few eyebrows and heart rates especially for the younger ones amongst us.

A/Prof Goh Lee Gan's plenary lecture at the Wonca Asia Pacific research Workshop is presented in full, underlining the importance of research in Family Practice in this new millennium. The accompanying report on the workshop by Drs Mike Yee and Sally Ho show that the Phuket trip was not just a "free holiday".

A special note of thanks to Dr Tan Yew Seng for being a regular contributor to the CM. His article on personal reflection is a 'must read' in this issue. Perhaps, this article could be the spark that is needed to ignite the fire in all of us, to stop 'waiting to be invited for tea' but step forth and be counted.

Other articles included for your reading pleasure encompass the regular (Hints and tips; Practice Corner), various SIGs and GDFM exam reports. Don't forget to book your places for the coming Convocation Dinner scheduled for 30<sup>th</sup> October and celebrate with our friends who were successful in their exams. See you there!

**Dr Wee Chee Chau**  
Editor of The College Mirror