

# WONCA News

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**Wonca**

World family doctors. Caring for people.

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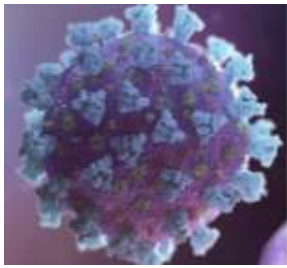
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## From the President: April 2020

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[Español](#) [Français](#) [中文](#)

As I write this I wonder if the way we work has now changed forever. As the threat and spread of COVID-19 continues its path, disrupting lives everywhere, no-one can be sure what our world will look like afterwards. As a new disease, it is impossible for the scientists and public health specialists to accurately project the trajectory: they can only use the emerging evidence as it becomes available and update us on a regular basis. The way we work is increasingly dependent on immediate analysis of globally collected data.

As we listen to and take the advice of our public health colleagues, family doctors around the world have risen to the challenge of this awful pandemic. In the midst of the massively increased workload for family doctors, I am proud of the level of support and collegiality displayed within and across our Member Organisations and from region to region: it is heartening indeed. Colleagues are disseminating scientific advice, clinical updates, reflective messages and professional support through their social media links and connections. They are keeping in touch with each other regularly, like family members, relaying information, urging courage in these extraordinary times.

Social distancing, lockdown, isolation, all lead to the cancellation or indefinite postponement of many WONCA events and conferences. We depend on these events to carry out the business of our organization but also, perhaps more importantly, to maintain and grow our connections with our professional colleagues and friends. In the absence of these events, all available means are being used to link people through video conferencing and dissemination of clips. WhatsApp, Facetime, Zoom, WeChat, Skype, Go-To-Meeting are all

being used to the full, for colleagues (and families) to maintain their connections. No doubt the adversity we are living through will prompt the innovative development of new and useful apps which have not previously even been thought of.

In very confusing and rapidly changing circumstances, up to date information is key. WONCA has created a webpage within the WONCA website, to host clinical advice, disseminate relevant articles, and share experiences. Use it and contribute to it. It is our shared COVID-19 platform, relevant to family medicine in the widest sense of the profession.

[WONCA COVID-19 resources page](#)

While the cancellation of WONCA events is a disappointment, and frustrating for organisers and potential participants, I urge all our members to use the connectivity at your disposal to maintain your group discussions, support and advice. We know already that we are facing unprecedented challenges for the foreseeable future, so we need to share our experiences, make sense of what we can and look forward to a less frightening future.

When the virus has been successfully tackled and brought under control, our worlds will no doubt return to something like our previous normality. But some things will have changed forever. Our patients will have different fears, anxieties and expectations. Our social interaction may be modified forever. Travel across borders may not be so straightforward as previously. Normality will be altered.

We have some way to go before we get through this. By all projections available, the virus will continue to affect our world until at least the end of 2020, with peaks of incidence at different times in different countries, and re-infection now a known possibility. This is a pandemic with an unknown endgame. I wish each and every one of our family doctors well during this time. Use the best advice available. Work collaboratively with your teams. Do the best you can for your patients. You should stand proud of your contribution to tackling this world crisis.

Donald Li

## From the CEO's desk: Family Doctor Day and conference update

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This month I want to highlight World Family Doctor Day, which will take place on 19th May, and also to provide an update on WONCA conferences and other events.



### World Family Doctor Day – 19th May

In just a few weeks' time from now, World Family Doctor Day will be upon us once more. World Family Doctor Day (FDD) – 19th May - was first declared by WONCA in 2010 and it has become a day to highlight the role and contribution of family doctors in health care systems around the world. The event has gained momentum globally each year and it is a wonderful opportunity to acknowledge the central role of our specialty in the delivery of personal, comprehensive and continuing health care for all of our patients. It's also a chance to celebrate the progress being made in family medicine and the special contributions of family doctors all around the world.

"World Family Doctor Day: May 19" has become important as the day spreads around the world, and has been translated into a number of different languages, including Spanish, Portuguese and Chinese:  
- Día Mundial del Médico de Familia: 19 de Mayo  
- Dia Mundial do Médico de Família: 19 de Maio  
- 519世界家庭醫師日

### 2020 FDD theme – “Family doctors on the front line”

We're happy for Member Organizations to develop their own theme for FDD, depending on local priorities, but this year we'd especially

like to highlight the role of family doctors in standing in the front line in terms of providing care to their patients. Hence the theme of “Family doctors on the front line”.

Several epidemics and disasters over the years – from Ebola and SARS to natural disasters like the Japanese tsunami and the Christchurch earthquake – have thrust family doctors into the front line of patient care. As our President wrote recently, family doctors so often are first in – first responders to the event – but last out, as they deal not just with the event itself but also the sequelae among patients and communities. We have established a web page on the WONCA website where members can find out more about how to deal with the COVID-19 virus and how to access useful resource material from WHO and others to help them to manage the cases and to protect themselves and others.

Yet again family doctors are in the front line, providing care and advice to patients, families and communities. We want to celebrate our colleagues globally by featuring and promoting their activities through World Family Doctor Day

As before, WONCA has also made generic FDD posters available via the WONCA website, and the FDD logo is also available. [FDD resources](#)

Last year many of our colleagues across the globe celebrated the day by organising a variety of events and activities, and we received reports and photographs from many countries, which we were able to feature in *WONCA News*. Karen Flegg, the WONCA Editor, has produced a template for countries and College and societies and associations, to aid reporting. We look forward very much to receiving reports of this year's activities and will feature a number of these in future *WONCA News* editions.

[Submit FDD activity](#)

### WONCA Conferences and Events

We live in very strange times, and very sadly the global COVID-19 pandemic has taken its toll on many WONCA conferences and events. The update below is valid at the time

of writing, but the situation is VERY fluid, so everyone is advised to consult the WONCA website for the most up to date information. As of the time of writing:

> The WONCA Rural Health Conference planned for Dhaka in mid-April has been CANCELLED. However the Working Party on Rural Practice still hopes to be able to run a virtual conference, and you can find more details of this [here](#).

> The WONCA APR conference, planned for Auckland in late April, has had to be postponed. A revised New Zealand conference will take place, in Auckland, from 4th to 7th November. More information [here](#).

> The WONCA Iberoamericana-CIMF Cumbre and conference planned for Puerto Rico in late April and into early May has also had to be [postponed](#). Organizers hope to be able to re-schedule for later in the year, but please keep

an eye on the WONCA website for up to date news.

> As at the time of writing WONCA Europe in Berlin, and WONCA World in Abu Dhabi, are still going ahead. If there are any changes then we will post details on the WONCA website and circulate via the regular e-updates. Abu Dhabi may well extend the deadline for abstract submissions so please check their [website](#).

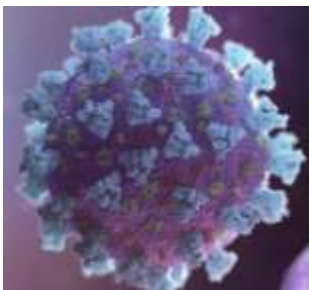
Dr Garth Manning  
CEO



## Feature Stories

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### Coronavirus (COVID-19) resources



#### Family Doctors on the front line

COVID-19 has been declared a pandemic by WHO, and is affecting everyone in every part of the globe. Family doctors are on the front line of medical care – both during the acute phase and also in dealing afterwards with the sequelae of the illness. In fact our theme for World Family Doctor Day 2020 is most appropriate – “Family doctors on the

front line”.

Through this webpage our aim is to provide a series of articles relevant to family doctors about COVID-19. We will also provide links to WHO and other reputable websites which contain valuable information for family doctors having to deal with COVID-19 cases.

#### President's messages

Our President, Dr Donald Li, has written a number of articles on COVID-19 in recent weeks. These have been published in WONCA News and elsewhere, based in the main on the experiences of our colleagues in China, which was the first (and so far, worst) country affected. A number of these are listed below.

[Donald Li on the Coronavirus : first in, last out](#)

[From the President: March 2020](#)

[Message from China via the President](#)

[Chinese version](#)

[Corona Virus: BJGP Article 28 January 2020](#)

Dunlop C, Howe A, Li D, Allen LN. The coronavirus outbreak: the central role of primary care in emergency preparedness and response

## [BMJ article March 23, 2020](#)

Li DKT, Zhu S. Contributions and challenges of general practitioners in China fighting against the novel coronavirus crisis

## WHO resources

### [WHO Coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\) outbreak](#)

### [WHO: Occupational safety and health in public health emergencies: a manual for protecting health workers and responders](#)

a manual which provides an overview of the main OSH risks faced by emergency responders during disease outbreaks and other emergencies, such as natural disasters, chemical incidents, radiological emergencies and emergencies involving conflicts.

### [WHO Course on Emerging respiratory viruses, including COVID-19: methods for detection, prevention, response and control](#)

The course provides a general introduction to COVID-19 and emerging respiratory viruses and is particularly intended for public health professionals, incident managers and personnel working for the UN, international organizations and NGOs. Course material is in English, Spanish, French and simplified Chinese.

### [Coping with stress](#)

## WHO EPI-WIN updates

### [WHO Information Network for Epidemics-EPI-WIN](#)

A key component of epidemic and pandemic preparedness is ensuring systems are in place for real-time information to flow from a trusted source to the people at risk.

### [EPI-WIN updates archive](#)

## Major Journals' resources

### [NEJM](#)

### [BMJ](#)

### [The Lancet](#)

### [JAMA](#)

### [Uptodate](#)

### [EBSCO](#)

### [CEBM- Oxford Covi-19 Evidence Service](#)

## AAFP information

We are especially grateful to the American Academy of Family Physicians for permission to quote their various valuable resources.

### [Respond to Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) webpage](#)

### [Coronavirus: six ways to prepare your practice now](#)

## Shabir Moosa's Blog

We are especially grateful to Professor Shabir Moosa for permission to re-post from his AfroPHC blog.

### [Coronavirus: 'Stop saying it's a bad flu' – Doctor fighting Italy outbreak shares dramatic account](#)

### [New 'Wuhan shake' goes viral amid coronavirus fears](#)

### [Coronavirus Is Exposing Deficiencies in U.S. Health Care](#)

### [COVID-19: What Can the World Learn From Italy?](#)

### [Digital Solution for free for Covid-19- Sharing patient documents and cases](#)

### [Corona Virus Resources \(Global\)](#)

## Other items of interest

### [RCGP \(UK\) Covid-19 resource page](#)

### [Hong Kong College of Family Physicians: Covid-19 Hub](#)

[CDC: Pandemic Influenza Triage Tools :User Guide](#)  
[Global GP project - perspectives of worldwide family physicians](#)

## WHO resources on COVID-19

WHO has developed numerous resources on COVID-19. An indicative list follows:

### **WHO Training course on COVID-19 (3 hours)**

The course provides a general introduction to nCoV and emerging respiratory viruses and is intended for public health professionals, incident managers and personnel working for the United Nations, international organizations and NGOs. It has different language versions (English, Chinese (simplified), French, Spanish) and could be useful for WONCA members. A three hour course.

#### [>WHO training course COVID-19](#)

Introduction: This brief introduction provides an overview of emerging respiratory viruses, including COVID-19.

Module A: Introduction to Emerging respiratory viruses, including COVID-19: Overall learning objective: To be able to explain why a emerging respiratory viruses, including COVID-19, are a global threat to human health

Module B: Detecting Emerging respiratory viruses, including COVID-19: Surveillance and Laboratory investigation: Overall learning

objective: To describe how to detect and assess an emerging respiratory virus outbreak

Module C: Risk Communication and Community Engagement: Overall learning objective: To describe what strategies should be used to communicate risk and engage communities to detect, prevent and respond to COVID-19

Module D: Preventing and Responding to an emerging respiratory virus, including COVID-19: Overall learning objective: To describe strategies for preventing and controlling emerging respiratory pathogens, including coronavirus outbreaks.

### **Global research database on coronavirus disease (COVID-19)**

WHO is gathering the latest scientific findings and knowledge on coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and compiling it in a database. We update the database daily from searches of bibliographic databases, hand searches of the table of contents of relevant journals, and the addition of other relevant scientific articles that come to our attention. The entries in the database may not be exhaustive and new research will be added regularly.

#### [>Research Database](#)

### **WHO Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) technical guidance**

All technical guidance by date of publication or topic. Some interesting examples include:

- [Global Surveillance for human infection with COVID-19](#)
- [getting your workplace ready for Covid-19](#)
- [Risk communication package for Health Care Facilities](#)

#### [>All technical guidance](#)

## Help in troubling times

Two of our Working Party chairs, Chris Dowrick and John Wynn-Jones are leading the way in encouraging colleagues to say what they are finding helpful in these troubling times dominated by the Coronavirus pandemic.

### **Prof Chris Dowrick**

*chair WONCA Working Party on Mental Health writes:*

We are all faced with tremendous levels of

anxiety about the effects of corona virus on our patients, our families and ourselves.

Today, I simply want to share with you this beautiful poem by the American environmentalist Wendell Berry: The Peace of Wild Things

### **The Peace of Wild Things**

*When despair for the world grows in me  
and I wake in the night at the least sound*

*in fear of what my life and my children's lives may be,  
I go and lie down where the wood drake rests in his beauty on the water, and the great heron feeds.  
I come into the peace of wild things who do not tax their lives with forethought of grief. I come into the presence of still water. And I feel above me the day-blind stars waiting with their light. For a time I rest in the grace of the world, and am free. What are you finding helpful in these troubling times?*

## **Dr John Wynn-Jones**

*chair WONCA Working Party on Rural Practice writes about his favourite 10 albums.*

When you try to put 10 iconic records together, you will have to leave some equally influential albums out. My list was long and I still suddenly remember an album that I should have added. I have left out classical music and only allowed one album per artist (otherwise it would have been full of Dylan!).

Some genres are missing, especially jazz and many apologies to the memory of great Jazz hero such as Miles Davies and Dave Brubeck. Not in order but each one was a coveted piece of vinyl or later on CD.

Please tell me if any of these were your favourites? What next? Favourite paintings, poems and books to come.

To paraphrase the book by Garbriel Marquez "Stuff in the Time of Covid"

## **Album Number 10 - The Beatles: Abbey Road**

Well it's the last one. How could someone my age grow up, without experiencing the influence of the "Fab Four". I have chosen, my favourite and their last recording. It wasn't their last release, because what was to be "Let it Be/Get Back Album" languished in recording tapes until Phil Spector gave it his lavish uncharacteristic (for the Beatles) "Wall of Sound" treatment.

After the tense and unpleasant recording sessions for the proposed Get Back album, Paul McCartney suggested to music producer George Martin that the group get together and make an album "the way we used to do it". Martin agreed, but on the strict condition that all the group – particularly John Lennon –

allow him to produce the record in the same manner as earlier albums and that discipline would be adhered to. No one was entirely sure that the work was going to be the group's last, though George Harrison said "it felt as if we were reaching the end of the line". Personal issues remained a problem, however. John privately left the band just before the record's release and Paul officially declared the end of the Beatles the next April.

It was their eleventh studio album and it was released in September 1969 by Apple Records. The Album was named after the EMI recording studios in Central London. The album and the famous zebra crossing photograph has made the studios the most famous in the world attracting big names and tourists from across the globe. (some of Dark Side of the Moon were also recorded there) The album faced mixed reviews from the press on release but it is now hailed as one of their very best.

During the sessions, Lennon expressed a desire to have all of his songs on one side of the album, and McCartney's on the other. The album's two halves represented a compromise: Lennon wanted a traditional release with distinct and unrelated songs while McCartney and Martin wanted to continue their thematic approach from Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band by incorporating a medley. Lennon ultimately said that he disliked Abbey Road as a whole and felt that it lacked authenticity, calling McCartney's contributions "[music] for the grannies to dig" and not "real songs", and describing the medley as "junk ... just bits of songs thrown together". For me, the 2 songs that really stand out are those written by George Harrison, "Something" (inspired by the title of James Taylor's "Something in the way she moves) and "Here Comes the Sun" (written in Eric Clapton's garden). Both songs demonstrate what a mature and brilliant songwriter he had already become.

Other classics were Come Together, Maxwell's Silver Hammer, Oh! Darling, I Want You (She's So Heavy), Because, You Never Gave Me your Money, She Came in Through the Bathroom Window. Rather prophetically the last song, "The End" (except the hidden "Her Majesty") appears to signal that it was really the end. So many of us who grew up with The Beatles were in deep shock when the split up. How could they, they belonged to us and life would never be the same again!

The sleeve photograph has become as important as the record itself. Daily tourists, celebrities and media emulate the picture by holding up traffic on Abbey Road. It's the only Beatles sleeve not to have their name or title on it, but as Apple's creative designer said "We didn't need to, they were the most famous band in the world" It was taken at



11.30 am on 8th August 1969. A policeman held up the traffic and they were given 10 minutes to get it done while the photographer

stood on a stepladder. The crossing was subsequently given Grade 2 Listed Status.

Shortly after the album's release, the cover became part of the "Paul is dead" theory. According to followers of the rumour, the cover depicted the Beatles walking out of a cemetery in a funeral procession. The procession was led by Lennon dressed in white as a religious figure; Starr was dressed in black as the undertaker; McCartney, out of step with the others, was a barefoot corpse; and Harrison dressed in denim was the gravedigger. The left-handed McCartney is holding a cigarette in his right hand, indicating that he is an imposter, and the number plate on the Volkswagen parked on the street is 28IF, meaning that McCartney would have been 28 if he had lived – despite the fact that he was only 27 at the time of the photo and subsequent release of the record. The escalation of the "Paul is dead" contributed to Abbey Road's commercial success in the US. False news is nothing new. Can we imagine how this would have unfolded with social media now.

Please take a look at [this video](#) to bring those memories flooding back

## Working Party News

### Formulating the Global Patient Safety Action Plan 2020-2030

Global consultation "A Decade of Patient Safety 2020-2030: Formulating the Global Patient Safety Action Plan".

From 24-26 February 2020, 73 global experts from 45 countries met at WHO Geneva to define the activities that WHO will pursue in its action plan for patient safety in the decade 2020-2030.

Dr Rosario Perez (right) and Dr María Pilar Astier (left), members of [WONCA Working Party on Quality and Safety](#), participated in the working groups. The meeting was conducted by Dr Neelam Dhingra Kumar, Sir Liam Donaldson and Dr Edward Kelly from WHO Headquarters. A tireless team of WHO



technical advisors worked as group leaders to collect and summarise all proposals. So, a big thank you to all the work did by this strong WHO team!





The international experts worked on the [Global Action on Patient Safety](#) approved at 72th World Health Assembly in May 2019. They described the current situation on patient safety in their countries and international organizations. Group discussions lead to many proposals on 12 relevant topics:

1. Safety in patient care, clinical processes and use of medical products and devices.
2. Patient safety policy and priorities
3. Leadership and patient safety culture
4. Sufficient competent and compassionate health workforce: patient safety education and training following [WHO Multiprofessional Curriculum Guidance on Patient Safety](#).
5. Human factors capability and capacity, and health workforce and workplace safety
6. Measurement, reporting, learning and surveillance of risks and patient safety incidents.
7. Patient safety research and innovation
8. Global patient safety challenges for all
9. Patient engagement and empowerment: storytellings, shared decision making, patient advocacy...
10. Patient safety in an era of Universal Health Coverage (UHC): Safety and quality across the continuum of care
11. Developing networks and partnerships to create a strong patient safety culture
12. Water, sanitation and hygiene, infection prevention and control, injection safety and anti-microbial resistance

Drs Perez and Astier highlighted the important role of family doctors to guarantee a quality

and safer healthcare in primary care and therefore, safer and quality universal health coverage (#UHC) for all world's citizens. The way family doctors work responds to many of the characteristics of quality and safe care. We listen, care, inform and educate about patient safety and accompany our patients throughout their journey through the health system by coordinating their care, the medication they take and making shared decisions with them assessing risks and benefits to the patient in their context. In this way, we work every day to provide safe, quality care that is focused on the patient, their environment and their life goals. So we are really committed with the Action Plan to be implemented.

We invite all family physicians to talk and reflect with their colleagues and patients on topics of improving patient safety in the health care we provide every day. The best plan of action will not work if we, as family physicians, are not committed to patient safety and create safe partnerships with our patients. Patients who reflect the social reality, who can work in many sectors such as politics, the press, education, business, maintenance... and that our conversation and reflection with them will contribute to creating safer and higher quality care for everyone in every corner of the planet.

On the last day of this meeting, 26th February, the Action Plan was launched with the support of WHO Director, Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus. The Action Plan is going to be sent to Governments and Organizations to be assess and the final version will be approved by May 2021 in the World Health Assembly.

The quality and patient safety group is at your disposal to provide any information or documentation of interest. The [WHO page on patient safety](#) is a safe place to keep informed.

## Education for Primary Care open access items

Prof Val Wass, Chair WONCA Working Party on Education writes on the latest open access items in *Education for Primary Care*.

We are pleased to announce that the March issue 31:2 is now [on line](#).

This issue shares global experience of primary care very much linked with WONCA. It emphasises how we learn from each other.:

Free access for one month to:

[Systems thinking: advancing health advocacy training; a perspective from junior family physicians in the Middle East](#): Alameddine et al

Open access to an 8 country European paper

[Which positive view of general practice do medical students and trainees have? A systematic literature review](#): Le Floch et al

Note: Ramsay et al on [social accountability](#) available till end of March



## Featured Doctor

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### Prof Bob MASH - President, South African Academy of Family Physicians

#### What work do you do now?

I head up a clinical department at Stellenbosch University that includes family medicine, primary care and emergency medicine. My clinical work has always been in providing primary care in Khayelitsha, a large informal settlement on the edge of Cape Town where patients mostly speak isiXhosa. Family physicians in my department work in district hospitals and primary care facilities across rural and urban communities in the Western Cape.

I teach medical students, medical officers, general practitioners and registrars in family medicine. Much of our teaching is on-line as our students are scattered over hundreds of kilometres throughout the Western, Northern and Eastern Cape. I also have an interest in teaching motivational interviewing and



behaviour change counselling.

#### Other interesting things you have done?

When we had our first democratic government in 1994 the medical schools began to show more interest in teaching family medicine and primary health care. In order to help us develop our teaching I created the Handbook of Family Medicine to help medical students make sense of their encounters with primary care. The Handbook is now in its 4th edition

and is used extensively throughout sub-Saharan Africa as a textbook for both under- and post-graduate education. We added the SA Manual of Family Practice that focuses on clinical skills.

### [Link to Handbook of Family Medicine and SA Manual of Family Practice](#)

I also became involved in establishing a network of departments of family medicine and primary care in sub-Saharan Africa, which is now called [Primafamed](#). Primafamed has 25 countries and 40 departments in the network and we try to help each other develop education, training and research through South-South-North collaboration. Primafamed is now the official academic wing of WONCA Africa.

Primafamed also initiated the [African Primary Health Care and Family Medicine journal](#) so that researchers in Africa could publish their work. I have become the Editor-in-Chief and the journal has been very successful, with an increasing impact factor and inclusion in PubMed and Scopus.

Currently I am the President of the SA Academy of Family Physicians, which is the official member of WONCA. The Academy is working hard to advocate for family medicine, engage with policy such as the introduction of national health insurance, organise annual conferences, publish a national [SA Family Practice Manual](#) and provide continuing professional development. We are thinking about bidding for WONCA World to come to Cape Town in 2024 and hope for your support!

### **What is top of your research agenda at present?**

As I write this I am in Delhi representing Primafamed at the creation of a new global Primary Health Care Research Consortium. The consortium also includes WONCA as well as a number of other partners. We have published our initial evaluation of key knowledge gaps and research questions in the *BMJ Global Health*. Our initial research will most likely focus on integration of PHC services and measurement of PHC performance.

Closer to home I am busy with a national study to evaluate the implementation of Group

Education and Training (GREAT) for diabetes. Diabetes has become the leading killer of women in South Africa.

I am also interested in research capacity building and have just completed a project to build doctoral and supervisory capacity at two historically disadvantaged SA universities. We are hop

ing for substantial funding from the African Academy of Science to extend this work into the region with family doctors, nurses and midwives.



### **Your interests at work and privately.**

I am an artist and work mostly in acrylic, this was my second career option! I have been [posting my paintings](#) every week on Instagram to have an electronic repository. One example of many at right.

I am also a keen cyclist and am getting ready for the Cape Town Cycle Tour - the largest timed cycle race in the world.

## David PONKA, MD

### Director, Besroul Centre for Global Family Medicine



#### What work do you do now?

I am a family doctor in Ottawa and I also feel very privileged to be directing efforts at the [Besroul Centre for Global Family Medicine](#) at the College of Family Physicians of Canada. The Besroul is a global hub of thought and advocacy on the role of family medicine in health systems, and being a bilingual Canadian institution, has developed a special role in bringing together best practices both regionally and globally.

#### Other interesting things you have done?

The highlight of my career so far was spending several months with MSF/Doctors Without Borders in Chad during the peak of the Darfur crisis. It was gut wrenching and life changing ([more here](#)). I remember treating hundreds of internally displaced persons with malaria, and in particular one boy, whom we could not save. His father came to wrap his limp body in a crisp white sheet, and on the way out, stopped to thank us - earnestly - for our efforts. I have never looked at access to care the same way since.

#### About the Besroul Centre and its priorities?

The Besroul Centre for Global Family Medicine is in a time of growth. We have a new research lead, are hiring a new manager (please let me know if interested!), and have our first fellow from overseas whom we are mentoring around a medical education research project. We are also proud to be partnered with the WONCA mental health working group in mentoring a young family doctor in rural Kenya in his efforts to integrate mental health care into his primary care system.

Nonetheless, we remain a small team, and therefore must align with priorities of our College to gain traction on key files. It's all about focus and alignment. Thankfully, the priorities of the College are extremely relevant to global health: mental health integration,

team-based care models (including how family doctors can provide leadership), and universal coverage.

We have several ways to get involved: through one of our workgroups (Research including narrative methods; Education; Community Engagement); by participating in our monthly "Besroul Café" webinars; my joining our annual forums; or simply by writing to me directly ([dponka@cfpc.ca](mailto:dponka@cfpc.ca)). We would love to hear your input and ideas!

We are currently producing a series of podcasts on how we can come together as a global community to share lessons on the COVID-19 outbreak. What a critical time to demonstrate the importance of mutual learning and global community-building to face global problems. The first podcast, from Saudi Arabia, can be accessed [here](#).

#### Your interests at work and privately.

When I am not working, I am often skiing, or biking. My wife is very patient with the expanding collection of skis and bikes in our basement.

I have three wonderful girls (7,4,2) which not only explains my interest in family medicine and maternal and child health, but also keeps me constantly entertained. I am trying to raise them with a global-minded mindset—we have lived in the UK, France and briefly, Kenya—all while staying grounded and balanced. We love the outdoors and taking our puppy Hudson into the great Canadian outdoors. My wife is a curator of European Art at the National Gallery of Canada which is also very fortunate...family medicine is truly more of an Art. And we are all its care keepers.

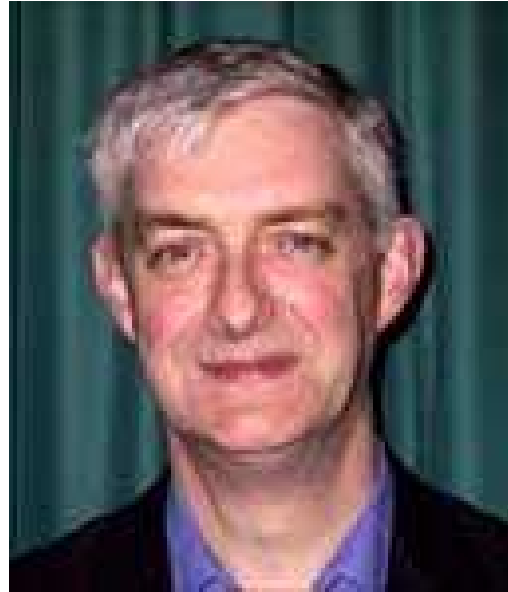
## Obituary

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### Professor Michael Boland – RIP March 25, 2020

*BOLAND (Skibbereen): on March 25th 2020, peacefully, after a protracted illness, in the loving care of Skibbereen Residential Care Centre. MICHAEL, dearly beloved husband of Susan, much loved Dad of Eve, Mary Jane and Mike, and cherished brother of Pat, Sheelah and Mary. Will always be missed by his loving family and dear friends. In accordance with current HSE guidance a private funeral will take place. A memorial mass will follow in due course.*

*“The purpose of life is not to be happy. It is to be useful, to be honourable, to be compassionate, to have it make some difference that you have lived, and lived well.” RW Emerson.*



Dear colleagues

It with great sadness that we announce the death of one of my predecessors as WONCA President, Professor Michael Boland of Ireland. Michael was a true visionary, and an inspirational leader in family medicine, as witnessed by the many tributes already paid to him. Professor Michael Kidd, also a former WONCA President, pays formal tribute to Michael Boland (below) and I can do little better than to echo those sentiments and also recommend to you the [profile of Michael Boland](#), published in 2009 to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the establishment of the Irish College of GPs, in which Michael was pivotal. We greatly mourn a global leader and send WONCA's condolences to Susan and to his children and family.

Dr Donald Li  
WONCA President

*Professor Michael Kidd, Past President of WONCA writes:*

These are some words I shared about Michael when I visited the Irish College as WONCA President in 2014:

“On this visit to Ireland I had hoped to travel down south to Cork and then on to Skibbereen to visit my predecessor as WONCA President, Michael Boland and his wife Susan. I want to speak a little about Michael Boland's legacy to WONCA, our World Organization of Family Doctors, and through him, some of the contributions the Irish College has been making to our global organization over the years.

Like many members of our WONCA family, I have very fond memories of Michael, his inspired leadership of our global professional body, his talents as a teacher, and his warmth and great generosity towards so many of the younger members of our profession.

One of my favourite family doctor quotes is from Michael Boland:  
What do people want from their doctor?  
A doctor who will listen  
A doctor who is flexible

A doctor who will help sort out problems  
A doctor who will be there when I need her

The Irish College of General Practitioners was established in 1984 and two years later Michael joined the World Council of WONCA representing Ireland. Michael quickly became a leader in WONCA and in 1998 was elected as president-elect, taking on the role of WONCA President in 2001. At that time, WONCA represented 65 countries, but over the course of his presidency that number reached 100.

I remember Michael's passion as president for the role that WONCA could play in tackling some of the world's great health challenges, especially smoking and HIV/AIDS.

WONCA represents family medicine at the World Health Organization (WHO). Wes Fabb, our former WONCA CEO has written that we owe this to the work of Michael and his successor as WONCA

president, Bob Higgins.



*Photo: Michael Boland (second from right) with from left WONCA Past Presidents David Game and Bob Higgins and at right Past WONCA CEO Wes Fabb, at the WONCA Singapore World conference 2007*

Back in 1998, Michael and Bob met with the then Director-General of the WHO, Dr Gro Harlem Brundtland, to

discuss WONCA and family medicine. Before becoming the leader of the WHO, Dr Brundtland had been Prime Minister of Norway, and before becoming Prime Minister of Norway, she had been a general practitioner in the public school health service in Oslo. Michael and Bob received a good hearing from Dr Brundtland, and came away with the impression that there was an understanding of, and support for, family medicine at the WHO.

Together Michael and Bob developed a 'Memorandum of Understanding for Collaborative Activities' between WONCA and the WHO, and this has formed the basis of WONCA's continuing contribution to the global health work of the WHO. Thanks to this initiative we now have a strong influence on the development of WHO policy for primary health care, and involvement in the rollout of many WHO programs in all regions of the world.

WONCA holds a world conference for family medicine every three years, and I well remember the great hospitality the members of the Irish College provided during our wonderful 1998 World Conference in Dublin, with the host organising committee led by Michael. At the time it was the largest global family medicine conference ever with over 4,000 participants and 1,000 accompanying persons.

Before the conference, the WONCA World Council met in beautiful Killarney on the banks of the Lakes of Killarney. Michael and Susan organised a boat trip across the lake for the World Council members and, on the way back, a huge storm blew up and nearly capsized the boat. That boat trip has become the stuff of legends.

I pay tribute to Michael Boland's great service to our global organisation and for the influence his contributions have had on the course of so many lives, including my own".

## Conference News

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### 17th World Rural health conference to go ahead - virtually

Dear 17th WONCA World Rural Health Conference registrants,

When we agreed that the 17th World Rural Health Conference would be in Bangladesh, we knew that we faced many challenges. We had faith that our young and enthusiastic group from Primary and Rural Health Bangladesh would put their heart and soul into it. They did so in abundance. They have had, and we have had, amazing support from all of you worldwide.

We have had many abstracts, registrations and donations to support our rural doctors who are in less favourable circumstances to attend the conference. Our Bangladesh organisers gave tirelessly of their time pro bono. Speakers and officials donated their time to support Bangladesh rural doctors and their communities. Just when we had momentum and a firm program around the abstracts, a tiny virus has now been a major disrupter.

**Rural WONCA executive has met and decided that the conference must go on – but virtually.**

After much consideration, the Executive have decided that with COVID-19 spreading rapidly, it is not sensible or prudent to have a physical gathering of rural doctors in Dhaka. Doctors are needed by their rural communities now more than ever. Bringing them together, and returning home, risks them being isolated from clinical duties for weeks or even worse, accelerating the spread of the virus to vulnerable rural areas.

We recognise that a virtual conference is not easy – especially catering for time zones – but we hope that, like at a face to face conference, we can adequately cater for you. For those of you who have presentations we hope you can present them. For those with posters – we still

want you to be able to “stand by them”. Our workshops will be a bit more difficult, but we hope to provide some interaction. Our keynotes can still go ahead. Rural café will be on again. We want your ideas as to how we can make this still a wonderful celebration for our Bangladesh colleagues and a lasting influence for good in rural Bangladesh.

For those of you who have booked flights or accommodation, we sincerely apologise – we do hope we have given you reasonable notice to cancel or defer your bookings.

For all those who have registered, we will put your registration to good use – if you can allow our organisers to retain this, we would ask that you do this. We will acknowledge you on the website as a supporter/donor. Similarly, for those who donated to support our deserving rural doctors, we will ensure we use your money wisely if you are still happy for this to be done. If your circumstances require a refund, please contact us to organise this. We hope to have some money left to establish a fund to assist rural family doctors and rural communities in Bangladesh.

We have an innovative and enthusiastic group of young doctors and we look forward to celebrating the capability of rural doctors to overcome obstacles that are put in front of us, no matter how microscopic or challenging.

We will let you know more in the near future.

Best wishes

Bruce Chater (Chair, WONCA Working Party on Rural Practice) and  
Zakiur Rahman (Chair Organising committee, 17th World Rural Health Conference)

### **Aplazamos las fechas de realización de la Cumbre Iberoamericana, y el Congreso Mesoamericano**

El comité ejecutivo de la WONCA-Iberoamericana-CIMF en común acuerdo con la Academia de Médicos de Familia de Puerto Rico comunican:

De acuerdo al panorama regional que enfrentamos respecto a la pandemia generada por el brote de la enfermedad por Coronavirus (COVID-19) y alineados con el hecho de que los Médicos de Familia/Médicos de Familia y Comunidad tenemos un papel fundamental como primera línea de acción en nuestros sistema de salud, como parte de los equipos que establecen estrategias de prevención así como de abordaje de los casos de esta enfermedad; nos unimos al esfuerzo mundial para disminuir la posibilidad de expansión del virus y APLAZAMOS las fechas de realización de la VIII Cumbre Iberoamericana de Medicina Familiar, el II Congreso Mesoamericano de Medicina Familiar/Medicina Familiar y Comunitaria.

Seguiremos adelante en los grupos de trabajo con miras a que estos eventos sean REPROGRAMADOS a una fecha probable en el segundo semestre del 2020; para lo cual se encomienda a la Academia de Médicos de Familia de Puerto Rico la propuesta de posibles fechas para la realización de estos eventos.

Agradecemos su comprensión y estamos a su disposición para continuar trabajando.

Con aprecio,  
Jacqueline Ponzo Gómez; Thomas Meoño Martín; Heileene Torees Colberg; Marina Almenas Morales

### **WONCA Iberoamerican Cumbre and Mesoamerican Congress postponed**

The WONCA-Iberoamerican-CIMF executive committee in cooperation with the Academy of Family Physicians of Puerto Rico announce:

Given the regional situation that we are confronting in respects to the pandemic generated by the Coronavirus disease outbreak (COVID-19) and that Family Physicians/ Family Physicians and Community have a fundamental role as the first line of action in our healthcare systems, as part of the teams that establish preventative strategies and address these types of diseases; we unite global efforts to decrease the possibility of spreading the virus; therefore we are postponing the VIII Iberoamerican Summit of Family Medicine, the II Mesoamerican Congress of Family Medicine/ Family Medicine and Community.

We will move forward to reschedule these events for the second half of 2020.

We appreciate your understanding.  
Jacqueline Ponzo Gómez; Thomas Meoño Martín; Heileene Torees Colberg; Marina Almenas Morales



## WONCA New Zealand 2020 conference postponed

It is with regret that the Board of The Royal New Zealand College of General Practitioners has today announced the postponement of WONCA NZ 2020 based on the uncertainty around COVID-19 (Coronavirus).

The decision has not been made lightly, given the incredible amount of work that has gone into the organisation of what was shaping up to be an outstanding conference. However, the College needs to act wisely and ensure our GPs and other primary care professionals, who are the key to medical care in the community, remain available where they're needed most.

We couldn't responsibly have so many New Zealand GPs, practice nurses, and practice managers out of circulation in late April, even for a short time, considering the evolving situation with COVID-19.

Unfortunately, the conference was going to coincide with heightened demands on GPs and their teams just as the country would be entering the winter flu season. This would have meant placing undue pressure on all our attendees.

The College Board decided to make this decision as early as possible to maximise the opportunity for delegates to alter their travel and accommodation arrangements.

Over the coming days the College team will be exploring all possible options for rescheduling WONCA NZ 2020 for later in the year. We will provide you with an update on this possibility by Friday, 13 March at latest.

We will be updating the WONCA NZ 2020 conference website: [www.woncancz2020.com/wonca20](http://www.woncancz2020.com/wonca20) regularly.

I wish to personally acknowledge the enormous work and success of the very committed team who have been planning for this event. Of course, like me, you will be disappointed not to have the conference run in April as planned. Postponement, given the unusual times we are in, is the right thing to do.

Regards,  
Dr Samantha Murton  
President, The Royal New Zealand College of General Practitioners



## WONCA CONFERENCES

### WONCA Conferences 2020

April 15-18, 2020	World Rural Health Conference	Dhaka, BANGLADESH	GOING AHEAD VIRTUALLY <a href="http://www.wrhc2020.com">www.wrhc2020.com</a>
POSTPONED	WONCA Asia Pacific region conference	Auckland, NEW ZEALAND	<a href="http://www.woncanz2020.com/">www.woncanz2020.com/</a>
POSTPONED	VIII Cumbre Iberoamericana y Congreso Mesoamericana de Medicina Familiar	San Juan, PUERTO RICO	<a href="http://cimfwonca.org/eventos/proximos-regionales/">http://cimfwonca.org/eventos/proximos-regionales/</a>
POSTPONED	WONCA Europe region conference	Berlin, GERMANY	<a href="http://www.woncaeurope2020.org">www.woncaeurope2020.org</a>
November 26-29, 2020	WONCA World conference	Abu Dhabi, UAE	<a href="http://wonca2020.com">http://wonca2020.com</a>

WONCA Direct Members enjoy *lower* conference registration fees.

To join WONCA go to: <http://www.globalfamilydoctor.com/AboutWONCA/Membership1.aspx>

### WONCA Conferences 2021 and 2022

July 7-10 2021	WONCA Europe region conference	Amsterdam, NETHERLANDS	<a href="https://woncaeurope2021.org/">https://woncaeurope2021.org/</a>
August 5-7, 2021	World Rural Health conference	Kampala, UGANDA	Save the dates
October 20-23 2022	WONCA World conference	Sydney, AUSTRALIA	<a href="http://www.woncanz2020.com/">www.woncanz2020.com/</a>

## Member Organization Events

For more information on Member Organization events go to [www.globalfamilydoctor.com/Conferences/MemberOrganizationEvents.aspx](http://www.globalfamilydoctor.com/Conferences/MemberOrganizationEvents.aspx)

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26 Aug **23rd Family Medicine Scientific Conference**

- 29 Aug  
Bangsar, Kuala Lumpur

2020

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01 Oct **RCGP annual primary care conference**

- 03 Oct  
Glasgow, United Kingdom

2020

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13 Oct **AAFP Family Medicine Experience**

- 17 Oct  
Chicago, USA

2020

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15 Oct **RACGP GP20**

- 17 Oct  
Perth, Australia

2020

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04 Nov **Family Medicine Forum / Forum en**

- 07 Nov  
**médecine familiale**

2020  
Winnipeg, Canada

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04 Nov **RNZCGP Annual conference**

- 07 Nov  
Auckland, NZ

2020

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20 Nov **North American Primary Care Research**

- 24 Nov  
**Group (NAPCRG) annual conference**

2020  
San Francisco USA

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