



N E W S L E T T E R

9TH ANNUAL HEALTHCARE SUMMIT KEYNOTE ADDRESS

By His Excellency **MR. DANIEL OHENE AGYEKUM**, Ghana's Ambassador To The United States



Distinguished guests, Fellow Ghanaians, Ladies and Gentlemen, Good Morning; I am extremely grateful to the President and members of the Ghana Physicians and Surgeons Foundation of North America, for giving us the opportunity to join you today at the 9th Annual African Healthcare Summit here in Atlanta.

Ladies and Gentlemen, as we gather here at this important summit which provides a platform for assessing the challenges in medical education and healthcare maintenance in developing countries, we must recognize what we have been able to achieve as a nation, and at the same time to acknowledge and remind ourselves of the further challenges that we face as we look into the future. Ghana has with justification, earned international acclaim for our leadership credentials and established democracy, which has grown and matured in the last few years. While standing together, united as a people working to overcome the many challenges that characterize these times of domestic and global uncertainty, we indeed have reason in taking pride in this achievement. Ghana presently stands on the threshold of potential economic and social prosperity. With the discovery of significant quantities of oil, we have a unique opportunity to transform our economic environment. The Government's efforts have focused on providing infrastructure to improve existing education and health facilities. It is my understanding that the objective of the Ghana Physicians and Surgeons Foundation is to work towards improved healthcare in Ghana through the support for health service research,

advocacy, promotion of specialist training and professional development in Medicine, Surgery, and related disciplines. The Ghana Mission commends and encourages the Ghana Physicians and Surgeons Foundation to continue to promote and provide quality healthcare for the people of Ghana, as you have done in the past.

Unfortunately, there exist unacceptable gaps in the provision of healthcare between a large majority of people in the rural and urban areas, and also between the privileged and under-privileged. These differences no doubt have a tendency to undermine the stability of our society and economy. It is therefore critically important that doctors and medical professionals in the Diaspora utilize their skills and expertise to build bridges to narrow the gaps in our healthcare delivery systems in order to ensure quality healthcare for all. After all, access to basic health care constitutes a basic human right.

Ladies and Gentlemen, it is no secret that the health profile of Ghanaians is low, and can be characterized mainly by the prevalence of poor nutrition, poor environmental sanitation and unsafe water supplies. Other disturbing features of the health scene, that signal worry include: Persistent high morbidity resulting from preventable diseases; High mortality among children under five years; High maternal morbidity and mortality; Low access to and disparities in modern healthcare facilities; and Low and declining public health expenditure. It seems ironic that although many of these common illnesses and diseases can be eliminated or controlled through better sanitation, nutrition and lifestyles, yet these continue to plague our society. It is therefore the Government's concern to support Primary Healthcare, by providing critical interventions in the following specific areas namely; community health planning and services; extending, expanding and equipping hospital facilities; localizing most medical treatment; and keeping the cost of health care down to a minimum. Furthermore, the Government in the short-term continues to improve the conditions of service and working environment of doctors, nurses and allied healthcare professionals to encourage and persuade such essential personnel to stay in the country.

If I should make any appeal to our Ghanaian doctors and medical professionals, so assembled here today, it is that you should mobilize yourselves in order to offer your wealth of medical knowledge, expertise and services to the people of your homeland Ghana, as some of you have been doing in the past.

It is most heartwarming that your Foundation has been able to pull together a wide array of medical professionals comprising officials from Ghana College of Physicians and Surgeons (GCPS), Ghana Health Services (GHS), Ghana Medical and Dental Council (GMDC), World Health Organization (WHO), the Ghana Doctors and Dentists Association of UK, and renowned academics and practitioners, to help in the deliberations to fashion out a working paper on the best practices for strengthening health service delivery in Ghana. It is my hope and prayer that the objectives of this Conference will be realized, and that those participating and also those who could not make it to the Conference will join hands in implementing the decisions and recommendations that will come out of this Conference.

Let me conclude by; once again, expressing my sincere gratitude to the Foundation for your initiative in organizing this significant event and inviting us to join you.

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EVENT TIMELINE

DECEMBER 7-9TH

The Eighth Annual General and Scientific Meeting (8th AGSM) of the Ghana College of Physicians and Surgeon is scheduled for Wednesday 7th to Friday 9th December 2011 in Accra.

APRIL 20-22ND

The 10th Annual African Healthcare Summit of GPSF will take place in April 20-22 2012, in Atlanta, Georgia. The theme of the conference is "Acute Medical Care in Resource-Limited Settings: Myth or Reality".

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

DR. MOSES ABOAGYE-KUMI



Greetings from North Carolina. I want to congratulate the entire membership of GPSF for a successful conference this year in Atlanta. The participation of members contributed to this success. We were fortunate to have the Ghana's ambassador to the US, His Excellency Mr. Daniel Ohene-

Agyekum, with us. He delivered a thought provoking speech on Healthcare Delivery in Ghana.

There was a strong delegation from Ghana as well. The Rector of the Ghana College of Physicians and Surgeons, Prof. David Ofori-Adjei, was present as well as a delegation from the Ghana Medical and Dental Council (GMDC) – Dr. Osae Adade (Chairman) and Dr. Atipui (Registrar). A very fruitful discussion ensued between the executive body and the council delegation regarding registration of physicians in the Diaspora.

As we move forward as a Foundation, we have set some goals for the year. Our foundation was established to help with postgraduate (medical) training in Ghana. Our major goal this year is to work more closely with the College in Ghana. We put together a team of physicians from the US and Canada for a CME event in Ghana in August. This was the first of an annual event in Ghana.

We are putting plans in place to provide mentorship and give lectures at the College during visits to Ghana. We will be denoting books and journals needed by the College as well as pay for online resources such as e-books and subscription to Up-to-date.

Also on the agenda is to work with the GMDC to streamline the registration process of physicians in the Diaspora. The delegation at this conference promised to work with us regarding this issue. The foundation wants to take up the task of credential verification for its registered members only. This will reduced the cost of registration for our members.

The growth of our foundation has been stagnant for awhile. Our goal this year is to encourage involvement of all members in the activities of the Foundations. We have set-up a Strategic Planning Committee, Fund-raising Committee and regional groups. These committees and groups will involve all members and not just executive members in decision making for the foundation.

As we are all know, we cannot achieve our goals without money. We need money to advance our agenda. I will encourage members to join in the fund-raising effort. No amount is too small. All contributions are tax deductible. I will encourage members to pay their yearly dues on time.

We need all members to get involve in moving the Foundation forward. I will challenge each and every one of our current members to help recruit new members. Make it a point to bring at least one person to the next conference. We cannot achieve much without your active participation.

Thank you for allowing me to serve. God bless Ghana, our motherland.

EDITORIAL



Join us in celebrating the first anniversary of the GPSF newsletter; it has come to stay! Starting from next year, there will be two issues in a year; the spring and summer issues. The newsletter will provide the forum for sharing news, ideas, and information to and from members. Members and affiliate members are welcome to contribute articles for the newsletter.

The GPSF was established to support the mission of the Ghana College of Physicians and Surgeons (GCPS) in providing quality postgraduate medical training in Ghana. The Foundation this year in collaboration with the GCPS, Africa Partners Medical, and Korle-Bu Neuroscience organized the first ever national CME conference – Medical Knowledge Fiesta 2011 - in Accra for practicing physicians. The Secretary of GPSF likened the event to the sport of surfing. We were all along waiting for a good and appropriate wave to surf on. Now it is here; let us make it an annual event. In this issue, the proceedings of the 9th Annual Healthcare Summit in Atlanta in April 2011 and the CME in Accra from August 1st to 5th, 2011 are highlighted. The Foundation also supports several non-profit health initiatives in Ghana by Ghanaian health professionals in North America. Ongoing initiatives will be highlighted in each issue of the newsletter. Finally, we request your help as we build our membership base to encourage physicians and other healthcare professionals who are Ghanaians or have interest in healthcare delivery in Ghana to join GPSF, so together we can achieve the goals of the Foundation.

ELIJAH PAINTSIL, MD, FAAP

CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

The 9th annual meeting of the Ghana Physicians and Surgeons Foundation of North America (GPSF) took place at the W-Midtown Hotel, Atlanta in Georgia from April 15 -17, 2011. There were about 95 conference attendees. The theme was “Continuing Medical Education and Healthcare Maintenance: Challenges and Implementation in Developing Countries”. H.E. Mr. Daniel Ohene-Agyekum, Ghana's Ambassador to the US, gave the keynote address and set the tone for the conference. He commended the Foundation for its activities and the theme for the conference and inviting officials from Ghana and qualified personnel to deliberate on the role of physicians in the Diaspora in healthcare delivery in Ghana. Special guest speakers from Ghana included Prof. Ofori-Adjei, Rector of the Ghana College of Physicians and Surgeons; Prof. Tsiri Agbenyega, Former Dean, SMS-KNUST, Kumasi; Dr. Kofi Osae Adadey Chairman, Ghana Medical & Dental Council; and Dr. Eli Atikpui, Registrar Ghana Medical & Dental Council.

The scientific presentations were well received and rated as relevant to health issues in Ghana and consistent with the advertised theme of the conference.

The open forum was one of the most successful sessions at the conference. The discussions and questions were centered on how the Foundation and physicians in the Diaspora can engage and promote the mission of the Ghana College of Physicians in postgraduate education and the Medical and Dental Council in facilitating a timely and low cost processing of licenses for physicians who go on short term trips to Ghana. One of the innovations of this year's conference was the adoption of the junior members' forum where issues peculiar to junior members were discussed. Launching of the “Mentorship Program” was born during the junior members' forum. It was recognized by all members that career development navigation in the US is not trivial and provision of mentorship and guide to our junior members were in order.

The event was capped by a fundraising dinner dance to raise funds for the various projects the organization is planning both in the US and in Ghana to support the mission of the Ghana College of Physicians and Surgeons in Accra. The event was well organized and successful. Three awards were given out; 2011 Service Award to Prof. Thad Ulzen, 2011 Junior Award to Dr. Francisca Abanyie, and 2011 Leadership Award to Dr. George Ofori-Amanfo (outgoing President).

**MEDICAL KNOWLEDGE FIESTA
2011, AUGUST 1- 5
ACCRA – GHANA**

The first ever national Continue Medical Education conference for doctors in Ghana - Medical Knowledge Fiesta 2011- took place in Accra from August 1st to 5th, 2011. The event was organized by the Foundation in collaboration with the GCPS, Africa Partners Medical, and Korle-Bu Neuroscience. It was attended by over 300 physicians with 38 facilitating faculty (23 from the Diaspora and 15 from Ghana). The general expectation is that Medical Knowledge Fiesta has come to stay and we anticipate that many of you will volunteer to be part of the faculty in coming years. Read the opening ceremony addresses by the Chairman of the Council of State, Prof. Kofi Awoonor and the Rector of the College, Prof. David Ofori-Adjei, below. Enjoy captured scenes from 2011 Medical Knowledge Fiesta below!



Secretary of GPSF, Dr. Elijah Paintsil, welcomes conference attendees to Medical Knowledge Fiesta 2011.

A scene at panel discussion on Updates in Pediatrics.



Group photo after the opening ceremony of the Medical Knowledge Fiesta 2011

Rector and Chairman of the Council



“[This event] was attended by over 300 physicians with 38 facilitating faculty (23 from the Diaspora and 15 from Ghana).”

“Many countries are now looking for and utilizing the expertise of ‘DIASPORANS’ in evolving and implementing national plans.”

**WELCOME ADDRESS BY
THE RECTOR OF THE
COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS
PROFESSOR DAVID OFORI-ADJEI**

This is an important day in the calendar of the Ghana College of Physicians and Surgeons. I am indeed pleased that you have all responded to our invitation to be part of this Opening Ceremony. I look forward to such enthusiastic response year after year. I am particularly appreciative, Mr Chairman – Prof. Paul Nyame, of your acceptance to take charge of the function. It is in the records of the College, the efforts you put into involving Ghanaian doctors abroad in the activities of the young College. The Ghana Physicians & Surgeons Foundation of North America was founded consequently to support the College in its training efforts. The College has collaborated with Africa Partners Medical in its annual CME activities in Kumasi over the last six years or so. The other mutual partner in this activity is the Korle-Bu Neuroscience Foundation. The College looks forward to the implementation of other activities that have been discussed with our ‘brethren’ in extraterritorial abode; all in support of the professional development of the medical practitioner in Ghana. These include the journals project for the library of the College; and the filling of ‘pot holes’ in some of our specialties in a systematic manner. Normally, all the Faculties in the College are obliged to hold at least two CME/CPD activities as well as one Update Course a year. Some of these activities have involved external faculty and we look forward to more of such structured support. The Fellowship training program of the College is sub-specialty based and there are lots of opportunities to draw on all available expertise in developing these sub-specialties.

Thank you all for being here for the College and I look forward to a great Medical Knowledge Fiesta 2011.

**MEDICAL KNOWLEDGE FIESTA 2011:
KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY THE CHAIRMAN OF COUNCIL OF STATE**

The Chairman, The Honorable Minister for Health, President of the Ghana College of Physicians and Surgeons, Rector of the Ghana College of Physicians and Surgeons

Faculty of the Medical Knowledge Fiesta 2011, Members of the Diplomatic Corp, Participants, The Press, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen:

When the Rector of the College approached me to open this Conference I readily agreed. The reason being that I consider health an important aspect of national development and will support relevant activities in that direction. I also found the concept of drawing on the expertise of Ghanaian doctors in the diaspora to the conference to be worthy of support.

The Ghana College of Physicians and Surgeons is a national institution with the responsibility of training specialists in medical and surgical disciplines for our healthcare system. Apart from training specialists, a major function of the College is to promote continuing professional development. This function is not limited to the trainees of the College and is expected to include all doctors and other healthcare professionals. In this regard, I find the theme of the conference “Cutting Edge Updates for Medical Practice in Ghana” very appropriate.

Continuing Professional Development and Continuing Medical Education have become an integral part of the career development of all professions. Indeed it has become a requirement for retention on professional registers carried by professional regulatory bodies. A survey of the medical landscape today indicates that this College is the most appropriate body to promote continuing medical professional development. I will challenge the Rector to consolidate this initial achievement of harnessing the Diaspora in a structured manner and make it a regular feature on the Colleges calendar. I am informed that the majority of faculty is Ghanaian, coming from Ghana, North America, UK and South Africa.

Citizens in the diaspora have gained currency as an asset for national development. Many countries are now looking for and utilizing the expertise of ‘Diasporans’ in evolving and implementing national plans. I must congratulate the Ghana Physicians and Surgeons Foundation (North America) and Health Partners Medical of the USA for their support in the organization and delivery of this conference.

I would, however, urge you not to limit your involvement to educational activities. I believe that the country stands to benefit from your expertise in its quest to strengthen our health system. Forever, we are looking for expertise from outside our shores in other nationals. Such conferences offer an opportunity to create a forum to brainstorm on some of the issues relevant to the public’s health.

Mr. Chairman, it gives me great pleasure to have this opportunity to speak at the opening ceremony of this important function. I have the feeling that it will turn out to be a landmark event for the Ghana College of Physicians and Surgeons and the medical establishment in general.

It now remains for me to declare Medical Knowledge Fiesta 2011 duly opened.

Thank you.

NEWS

NEW EXECUTIVE BOARD AND OFFICERS 2011 – 2012

Executive Board: President: Dr Moses Aboagye-Kumi; President Elect: Dr. James Aikins; Vice President: Dr. Raphael Buckle; Secretary: Dr. Elijah Paintsil; Treasurer: Dr. Aba Ewusi

Ex-Officio Members: Dr. George Ofori-Amanfo, Dr. Nii Tetteh, Dr. Yosef Kwamie, Dr. Thaddeus Ulzen, Dr. Mireku-Boateng, Dr. Kwasi Debra, Dr. Alex Twum Boafo, Dr. Oheneba Boachie-Adjei.

Regional Liaisons: Northeast: Dr. Dickson; Southeast: Dr. Kofi Appiah; Western: Dr. Edward Ofori; South-central: Dr. Buckle; Mid-west: Dr. Raymond Narh; and Canada: Dr. Dan Otchere.

Membership Recruitment Working Group: Regional liaisons and coordinators are Dr. Raymond Narh and Dr. Owusu Addo.

Fundraising Working Group: Dr. Alex Twum Boafo, Dr. Aba Ewusi, and Dr. James Aikins.

Strategic Planning Working Group: Dr. Dan Otchere, Dr. Hansen, Dr. Anderson, and Dr. Yaw Ofori-Amanfo, and Dr. Moses Aboagye-Kumi (chairman).

Junior Members Mentorship program coordinator: Dr. Francisca Abanyie

Ghana Annual CME Planning Committee: Dr. Michael Opong-Kusi, Dr. Edward Anim-Addo, Dr. Thad Ulzen, Dr. Moses Aboagye-Kumi, Dr. Yosef Kwamie, Dr. Alex Boafo, Dr. Ndidiamaka Musa, Dr. Barbara Entsuah, Dr. Amenuve Bekui, Dr. James Aikins, Dr. Hasford, Dr. Paul King, Dr. Jocelyn Lapointe, Dr. Awewura Kwara, Dr. George Ofori-Amanfo, and Dr. Elijah Paintsil (coordinator)

SPECIAL FUNDRAISING DRIVE 2011

Thanks to the following individuals who have contributed to date towards the Foundation's special fundraising drive launched in April 2011:

Dr. Dickson, Dr. Moses Aboagye-Kumi, Dr. Leticia Okyere Darko, Dr. Raphael Buckle, Dr. James Aikins, Dr. Franklin Ayew, Dr. Edward Ofori, Dr. Victor Bruce, Dr. Alex Boafo, Dr. David Gboloo, Dr. Owusu Addo, Dr. Diana Mills Tetteh, Dr. and Mrs Bediako, Dr. and Mrs Ernest Asamoah, Dr. Joyce Millen, Dr. Theresa Ofori, Dr. Joyce Koram, Dr. Kingsley Lartey, Nana Serwaah Tabi, Dr. and Mrs. Joseph Orraca-Tetteh, Dr. & Dr (Mrs) Kingsley Orraca-Tetteh.

A YOUNG PHYSICIAN'S REFLECTIONS FROM ATLANTA

This year's 9th annual African Health Summit presented by Ghana Physicians and Surgeons Foundation (GPSF) was in my opinion a success. This is my third year attending the GPSF conference. I was first introduced to it by a member, Dr. Joyce Koram, when I moved to Atlanta from Michigan approximately 3years ago. I was very excited to hear about the organization and its mission to support post graduate medical education in Ghana and subsequently contribute to healthcare delivery in Ghana.

The first time I attended the GPSF health summit in Atlanta, a number of the participants appeared to be experienced physicians who knew each other from medical school in Ghana. I think there has been a change since then, in that there are a few more new faces this year. There were medical residents from programs here in the United States as well as recently graduated medical students who had studied in both Ghana and other countries. As a physician who is relatively new in practice, I am very pleased to see this trend and to note that GPSF executive board members continue to encourage the changes. The newly organized mentorship program will certainly help to increase participation in GPSF (kudos to Dr. Fran Abanyie- pediatric infectious diseases fellow, for volunteering to organize the mentorship program). I am hopeful that there will continue to be more participants who are newly practicing physicians as well as physicians in training, in the coming years. There is so much that we as "newcomers" can learn from the established members in this organization.

A key reason why I have repeatedly attended the continuing medical education programs sponsored by GPSF, is because I am truly inspired by all the wonderful representation of physicians (Ghanaians and non Ghanaians) who continue to give back to Ghana. I have not lived in Ghana for a number of years, and I trained here in the United States. Therefore, for me, these conferences, which showcase healthcare in Ghana, are always very informative. I am inspired to give back to our homeland when I hear of all the challenges facing the health care system in Ghana as well as the positive outcomes and the difference that we as physicians practicing abroad can make back home.



JULIET NIMAKO, MD



9th Annual Health Summit 2011 Group Photograph



Joy Galor at the Dinner Dance



No free dinner, so they say! Networking at the Dinner Dance



Dr. Asamoah sharing the global burden of Diabetes and Obesity – **Diabesity**

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