

**IAMRA**



**INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION  
IN MEDICAL REGULATION**

## **IAMRA NEWS UPDATE OCTOBER 2004**

This communication is provided in a continued effort to present IAMRA members and other international colleagues with up-to-date information about IAMRA initiatives and meetings attended by members of the Management Committee on behalf of the Association. If you have any questions or would like additional information on any of the items discussed below, please feel free to contact the IAMRA Secretariat.

### Fast Track Credentials System (FTCS)

IAMRA's Working Group on the International Exchange of Information on Physicians (IEIP) and the Working Group on Medical Passports have merged together to form one initiative, the *Fast Track Credentials System (FTCS)*. FTCS will focus on building the foundation for what has been previously known as the Medical Passport in an effort to develop a system by which medical regulators around the world can electronically exchange important physician information, thereby easing the migration of competent physicians from one country to another.

Rather than continuing with the two original working groups, sub-groups or "satellite" groups will study and improve upon the various elements that will ultimately be enhanced, combined and expanded to create the foundation for the FTCS. As you are aware, the General Medical Council (GMC) and the Medical Council of New Zealand (MCNZ) have been successfully involved in an electronic bi-lateral exchange of Certificates of Good Standing (CGSs). This project, led by Amanda Watson, GMC's Director of Registration, and Sue Ineson, MCNZ's Chief Executive Officer, will serve as the starting point for the FTCS and will gradually expand to include the exchange of additional kinds of information and the participation of an increasing number of regulators.

While Sue and Amanda continue to improve upon the GMC/MCNZ project, other satellite groups, most of which are already in place, will study or continue to study the:

- development of a CGS thesaurus (to enhance communication between regulators on information relating to a physician's professional reputation);
- standards of differing registering/licensing exams;
- development of a standard electronic screening exam;
- privacy and security requirements and other considerations for electronically exchanging fitness to practice information;

- improvement of credentials verification, including medical school coding systems and unique identifiers; and
- patterns of physician migration.

In conjunction with the development of the FTCS, the IEIP pilot project headed by Finlay Scott, Chief Executive of the GMC, will continue to test the routine exchange of fitness to practice information from one jurisdiction to another. The current model for the exchange requires the recipient to spot and act upon relevant information as it is received. The pilot will conclude in about 6 weeks after which an evaluation will take place to determine whether this model for information exchange is feasible. In the meantime, Finlay and his team will be exploring an alternative pathway for routinely exchanging the information, which will later be compared and contrasted to the original model.

### Call for Appointments

You should have received a communication regarding appointments to IAMRA committees, including instructions for making recommendations. The Management Committee has established three committees and one working group for which appointments need to be made: the Bylaws Committee, Fundraising Committee, IAMRA Biennial Conference Programme Committee and Exam Review Working Group. Appointment recommendations must be received no later than November 30, 2004. If you did not receive the call for appointments or need additional information, please contact the IAMRA Secretariat.

### Incorporation of IAMRA

IAMRA's incorporation has been finalized. IAMRA is now legally recognized as a separate entity from FSMB. The Association's incorporation also provides IAMRA the means to organizationally pursue its non-profit status with the United States Internal Revenue Service (IRS) while protecting the non-profit status of FSMB. IAMRA's newly adopted Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws were drafted in such a way as to assure compliance with the Texas Non-Profit Corporation Act and offer the greatest chance for approval of IAMRA's application for tax exemption. The application has been submitted and we hope to have it approved within the next few months.

### Official Relationship with the World Health Organization (WHO)

Representatives of IAMRA and WHO have initiated the joint project that will ensure IAMRA's admission into official relations with WHO and facilitate an effective collaboration. The two organizations are developing a tool for assessing medical regulatory systems worldwide in order to produce evidence that could ultimately support national authorities in improving their national health care systems.

WHO has identified human resources for health (the provision of skilled health care providers), as a crucial element for improving national health systems and services around the world, especially in developing countries. Although a broad constituency of governments, providers in the public and private sector, and civil society increasingly advocate scaling up major health interventions, they are also becoming aware that the means to deliver these health interventions are not present in many of the countries most in need. While concerted efforts have been made

to improve access to medicines for developing countries, this has not been the case for human resources.

IAMRA is partnering with WHO to develop a survey to assess how the health care service capacity (specifically of physicians) in countries around the world is related to their medical regulatory practices. The goal of the survey is to study national health care service capacities in order to identify regulatory gaps. Once existing regulatory gaps have been identified, it is WHO's long-term goal that a strategy for strengthening national capacities be established and medical regulatory practices implemented where needed.

IAMRA's participation in this study includes assisting with the development of the questions, distributing a sample survey to a test group for measuring its level of difficulty, forwarding the final survey for completion to you and other organizations included in a comprehensive distribution list, collating the information received, and collaborating on the development of a report to be completed by the end of May 2005. The results of this survey will be submitted for possible inclusion in the next publication of the World Health Report and presented at IAMRA's 2006 International Conference on Medical Regulation in New Zealand.

#### WHO-WFME Seminar

Thanyani Mariba, IAMRA Chair, was invited by the President of the World Federation of Medical Education (WFME), Dr. Hans Karle, to represent IAMRA at a seminar jointly hosted by WHO and the WFME. The seminar took place on October 4-6 in Copenhagen and was organized to discuss accreditation of medical education institutions and programmes. Thanyani presented information about the significance of assessing educational qualifications. He also participated in a discussion group over the course of the three-day meeting. A report will be forwarded to you upon its completion.

#### Conference Europeene des Ordres de Medecins (CEOM)

The CEOM is an umbrella organization representing medical regulatory authorities in 25 European nations. CEOM and IAMRA share a common purpose, that is, to protect patients from unfit practitioners and guarantee that consumers have access to qualified physicians. In order to avoid duplication of efforts and to achieve greater efficiency in addressing common issues, IAMRA and the CEOM have agreed to solve problems in partnership and to devise a work program that is compatible with the aims of both organizations. This will be accomplished through a series of meetings, alternating between IAMRA's biennial international conferences and the CEOM's December meetings in Paris.

The first CEOM/IAMRA meeting is scheduled for December 7. IAMRA will be represented by Thanyani as well as Management Committee members John Hillery, Ossama Rasslan and Finlay Scott. An agenda is being drafted and goals for a joint workplan are being considered. Topics suggested for discussion include: communication of disciplinary information between medical regulatory authorities; registration/licensing of migrant doctors (including electronic identity cards and the FTCS); and, medical ethics and religion.

A summary of the meeting's outcome will be included in the next Update.

IAMRA Web Site and Logo

Stonebridge Technologies, a business and technology integration service currently working with FSMB to update its Web site, will concurrently undertake the reconstruction of IAMRA's Web site and logo. A timeline for this project is being developed and designs are being discussed.

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Please share this and future Updates with others in your organization and jurisdiction.

You may forward any comments or questions relating to this newsletter or matters about IAMRA to:

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