

**ADVOCACY CONCLAVE FOR FACILITATING HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT IN ASSAM
Guwahati, 1 April 2017**

In order to sensitize opinion and decision makers about the need for capacity-building of master trainers/faculty in medical and allied health sciences institutions in Assam, a conclave was organized at the Assam State AIDS Control Society (ASACS) conference hall, Guwahati on 1st of April, 2017 as a prelude to the 9th National Conference of the Academy of Health Professions Educators (AHPE) of India – the NCHPE 2017 which aims to facilitate human resource development for health in Assam through capacity building of master trainers.

The conclave was attended by a plethora of key decision makers and administrators of the state and national level- namely, the Academy of Health Professions Educators, state-level representatives of the Health Ministry, Directorate of Medical Education Training and Research, Srimanta Sankaradeva University of Health Sciences (SSUHS) and faculty from various medical colleges, nursing, dental colleges and the Medical Institute Jorhat.

The invited resource faculties who graced the conclave included:

- **Dr Thomas V Chacko**
President, Academy of Health Professions Education , India and Director, PSG-FAIMER South Asia Regional Institute , Professor and Head, Community Medicine & Medical Education &, PSG Institute of Medical Sciences & Research, Coimbatore,
- **Dr Avinash N Supe**
Past President, Academy of Health Professions Education, India and Director GSMC FAIMER Regional Institute & Director Medical Education Mumbai and Dean as well as Professor, G I Surgery , GS Medical College KEM Hospital, Mumbai
- **Dr Tejinder Singh**
Director, CMCL-FAIMER Regional Institute, Christian Medical College, Vice-Principal, UG Studies and Professor, Department of Pediatrics CMC Ludhiana .

The conclave was inaugurated by the Vice Chancellor, DME Assam Prof AK Barman along with Principal I/C Prof Pranabjit Biswanath and Prof Bishnu Ram Das. The Vice Chancellor of SSUHS, Prof. Umesh Ch. Sarma delivered the inaugural address.

The following items in the agenda were discussed:

1. Present status of health manpower training and need for competency-based education:

Prof. Thomas Chacko, President AHPE, gave an overview by raising pertinent questions and issues like:

- a) Are we producing job-ready graduates? – the answer being “no”
- b) MCI’s shift to competency-focused education and its implication for an urgent need for faculty development;
- c) Are support mechanisms and community of practice in place to help trained teachers translate training into action? This being an important element for knowledge translation, needs specific efforts at the institutional, state and national level.

Following the presentation, the following queries and concerns were raised by the invitees:
Do we need simulators for CBME?

- How to make basic science interesting to students and how can we bridge the gap in the basic science teaching to ensure applicability to clinical science?
- how to balance knowledge versus skills learning in the context of students being preoccupied and focused on knowledge-based PG entrance exams
- Exams and student assessment methods not being properly structured due to non availability or lack of awareness about standard guidelines
- Communication skills training,– the practicality of its implementation
- ATCOM including value-based humanism, role modelling by teachers and professionalism and ethical issues - time constraints in implementing them and other issues and problems faced by students.

Prof Dr Thomas Chacko reassured them that all these issues would be noted and addressed while finalizing the list of Pre-conference workshops. Most of the workshops announced on the NCHPE 2017 Conference website like “Early Clinical Exposure”, “Competency-based Education”, “Curriculum design” , “Improving communication skills”, “Assessment For Learning”, “Assessment of Performance in CBME”, “Academic Leadership and Mentoring” and “Professionalism” are already there and so the concerns and capacity-building of faculty from the region will be taken care of. Other issues and concerns would be addressed during the panel discussions and debates being proposed during the conference like “How to overcome PG entrance examination issues- balancing skills versus knowledge?” and “Do we need Simulation Labs for Competency-based Medical Education” ; Concerns on student issues and institutional support and mentoring would also be introduced as a panel discussion or as workshop.

2. How can AHPE and the NCHPE 2017 Conference help meet manpower training need for competency-based education?

Prof Dr Tejinder Singh presented the emerging trends in faculty development across the world with emphasis ranging from

- simple pedagogy helping the teacher with improving instructional skills using medical education technology and practice of micro-teaching (focus on the teacher and teaching skills)
- faculty development programs that are in the form of Workshop series (similar to receiving booster doses in immunization) that result in focusing on acquisition of competencies and expected graduate outcomes of the Indian Medical Graduate
- emphasis on facilitating student learning by giving opportunity to do deliberate practice for skill development,
- with teacher’s role being mainly providing feedback and formative assessment for learning the skills through a variety of performance based assessment methods;
- Faculty development taking the form of longitudinal Fellowship programs with emphasis on curriculum design
- creating a supportive environment at the institutional level to facilitate translation of awareness to practice of the new methods and approaches learned by teachers
- the faculty helping each other within a “Community of Practice” within and across institutions.
- MCI’s roadmap for Faculty Development in India are planned to move on similar lines beyond the present Basic Course workshops.

The Conference will provide opportunities for experience-sharing by faculty from all over India where they will share innovative approaches being used by them including their experience with participating in longitudinal faculty development programs through which they could build their capacity to bring about curricular changes including adoption of newer methods of teaching learning assessment in the form of

posters, oral presentation, participation in debates and small-group discussion. Capacity building of faculty from the North-East region will also be facilitated through attending the Workshops designed to meet their specific learning needs to prepare them to use methods needed in competency focused teaching-learning to facilitate “mastery learning”.

3. How can AHPE and the NCHPE 2017 help future needs?

Prof Avinash Supe presented the achievements of AHPE and Experts in education such as

- helping the MCI’s Vision 2015 document listing the Graduate Outcomes of IMG and the important role of faculty development in ensuring these graduate outcomes;
- the GMR guidelines for initiation of ATCOM sessions (clearance from ministry is awaited for its implementation).
- It has through its successful conduct of National Conferences in HPE starting from 2007 at AIIMS Delhi has resulted in emergence of innovative educational work of health professionals within India to be shared.
- More than 800 educational innovation projects in India got a platform for presentation at the NCHPE conferences during the few years.

He felt that future conferences could focus on

- addressing the dilemma of clinical teachers balancing clinical workload and Teaching,
- using residents as teachers and thereby helping postgraduates learn through teaching,
- encouraging the “Scholarship of Teaching” by identifying Faculty ‘success’ indicators and performance evaluation of teachers including review/ building up on the current MCI criteria for publications for career progression/promotion of health professionals;
- encouraging and recognizing young faculty to become teaching scholars by instituting “Young Educators Award”
- creating opportunities for all faculty to attend conferences and “meet the experts” in different fields of medical education during Breakfast/ tea breaks – creating opportunity to network and gain from attending the conference.

Suggestions from audience for improving Health Professions Education in the region:

Pre-conference:

- Principals/DME/Officials of Health University to encourage by attending themselves as well as deputing Core MEU faculty as well as two faculty per department to attend workshops and conference.
- Grant of leave/TA/DA for faculty engaged in MEU activities

Ensuring Political Commitment

- Making FD mandatory in service rules(time frame of 5 years)
- Gap analysis: creation of infrastructure and manpower development to bridge gap
- Establishment of Regional centre in North East
- Allocation of budget for research/training
- Establishment of MEU in all medical colleges
- Grant of leave/TA/DA for faculty engaged in MEU activities

Suggested Post Conference actions by Institution/DME

- Creating TOT centres
- Organizing TOTs
- Networking and Building Codes of Practice.