5/10/2017

Dear Colleagues,

On behalf of the executive Board of the GPSF and membership, I want to take this opportunity to welcome you to our organization.

GPSF is an organization of medical professionals resident in the US and Canada, who are of Ghanaian heritage or are committed to working towards improved healthcare delivery in Ghana. It is a registered 501(3) C corporation in the United States, incorporated in Delaware. It was established with a core mission to support the Ghana College of Physicians and Surgeons (GCPS), an institution established by an act of parliament in 2003 to provide quality postgraduate medical education in Ghana.

The foundation's mission has included mission support to local and district hospitals, teaching facilities and outreaches to individual communities. The GPSF has played an advocacy role for improving health care delivery, influencing health policy and healthcare education issues and challenges in Ghana. This is achieved through collaboration with the Ghana College of Physicians and Surgeons (GCPS), Ghana Medical Association (GMA), Ghana Medical and Dental Council (GMDC) and Ministry of Health (MOH).

Recent accomplishments of the organization include:
- Donation of supplies over $200K to the Tarkwa hospital and over $500K to the Hope Xchange hospital in Kumasi.
- Supporting travel fellowships for 2-3 residents of the college per year the last 3 years to Yale school global initiative program.
- MOU with the Ministry of Health and the GHS.
- GMDC clarification of temporary and permanent licensing procedures and redresses if members pursue licensure needs through the college.
- DO acceptance to practice as providers in Ghana.
- Starting the formation of chapters as mandated by our constitution.
- The formation of a diaspora medical corp.
- Creation of a faculty bank to address healthcare needs on a short term basis when the need arises.

Over the next few months, we hope to finalize the smooth implementation of resolutions to ease our commitment to returning home to collaborate with teachers, researchers and clinicians in various clinical settings in private, public and teaching hospitals.

Our annual conference this year was the most well-attended to date and took place in Atlanta on April 21-23 with the theme "New and Reemerging infectious diseases and global health security - the role of African Diaspora". The conference attracted distinguished speakers from the US and Africa, and we were honored to have the Second Lady of Ghana, Mrs Samira Bawumia, as our guest of Honor. The Keynote speaker, Dr Badu Sarkodie, spoke on the Ghana experience with New and Reemerging infectious diseases. Dr Chastity Walker of the CDC presented on "Global Health security agenda of the CDC" whilst Dr Rachel Idowu of CDC Africa based in Ethiopia discussed the role of African diaspora in healthcare security.

The Ghana Delegation was headed by the Director General of Ghana Health Services, Dr
Anthony Nsiah-Asare, The Rector of the GCPS, Professor Jacob Plangu-Rhule, The CEO of University Of Ghana Medical Center Professor Aaron Lawson, The director of the GMDC Dr Eli Atipui, Dr Ken Sagoe, a consultant in the health service, and the Vice president of the GMA, Dr Frank Ankobea. The discussants ably tackled the challenges of the control and eradication of infectious diseases and strategies for elimination of emerging infectious disease in Africa.

This being the 15th anniversary of our founding, we were honored to have present several of our preceding presidents who were honored at our dinner and fundraising Gala. Our Host for the evening, Mr Clifford Owusu, was entertaining and helped raise $25K to fund our projects for next year - Rites travel awards, HPV vaccination efforts, mission’s trip resources, and student and resident members of the young professionals needs.

Next year’s meeting will be held in Los Angeles, after 5 years in Atlanta and 15 years on the East Coast to broaden participation by members of our North American organization. We hope to hold meetings in the future in other localities when chapters are established to support the logistics of these meetings. The theme for 2018 is Non-Communicable diseases: management and treatment dilemma comes after recognizing the changing role of chronic disease as a cause of mortality and morbidity across the African continent.

Our conference next year will be preceded by the GCPS/GPSF presentation this fall, September 11-14th at the FIESTA in Accra: NonCommunicable Diseases - the eye of the crocodile. The topics presented will reflect the titanic shift and what lies underneath our iceberg in healthcare delivery in this region. The contribution of Specialists, General Practitioners, governmental agencies, non-governmental agencies, cultural leaders, churches and individuals in addressing the burden of disease states will be addressed at the next meeting. Our organization supports a holistic approach to healthcare delivery and intentional design of healthcare for our communities to facilitate healthcare access, health-promoting lifestyle and nationwide delivery of healthcare as a mandate of the United Nations global agenda for 2030.

I will encourage members to stay involved in our local chapter formation efforts, to attend regional meetings, volunteer services in our initiatives (newsletter, fundraising, conference committee, medical evaluation, faculty bank) so we can expand our influence in the Americas and in Ghana. We encourage you to join as a participating member, for membership has its benefits, and our website will help in your navigation of this process. Our young generation of students, interns, residents and YPs are encouraged to be involved in our social media presence, chapter efforts and national meetings. I look forward to seeing you in the coming years and encourage your support and involvement to improve healthcare education and delivery, and with our increasing strength in numbers and expanded mandate to accomplish our advocacy goals.

We look forward to reaching our committed goals with your help.

Victor Owusu-Yaw
President