

EDITORIAL

The Nordic Federation of General Practice

The Nordic Congress on General Practice held in Stockholm this June was the scene of an important event, when the five chairmen of the national colleges signed the final documents and thereby could announce the foundation of a new union, the Nordic Federation of General Practice/NFGP.

During the 1980s and '90s spirits were high and a lot of good work was done in the field of general practice. Academic institutions, national colleges, and clinical specialities were established in all the Nordic countries, and in 1983 the Scandinavian Journal of Primary Health Care/SJPHC published its first issue.

The Journal has grown to play an important role for Nordic researchers in our field wanting to present their papers. Members of the editorial staff deliver a huge amount of work on an entirely voluntary basis, remunerated with nothing but honour in return. The colleges' members have carried the financial burden, paid through subscription rates included as part of their national college fees.

Until 1999 the organizational framework of the Journal was rather loose and a growing awareness of the need to formalize the ownership emerged. A foundation was established, with a college-funded financial basis and the chairmen of the national colleges serving as the foundation's board.

Besides the important role of the foundation as a basis for securing the future of the Journal, the idea of including the Nordic Congress (NC) in the foundation's portfolio has been maturing during the course of the board's annual general meeting. The history of the congress is very similar to that of the Journal. It has proved to be an important institution for practitioners and researchers in our region. It is held every other year, the responsibility to host and arrange it being shared among the five countries.

Throughout the years, a meticulous process of discussions and negotiations among the parties involved has been going on, successfully concluded this June.

The NFGP is set up as a body with three working parties: the editorial committee of the SJPHC, the Congress Committee with appointed representatives from the five countries, and the Nordic Chairmen's

Meeting. The federation's executive board consists of the five college chairmen plus a president elected by the board. The daily administrative work is carried out by a director.

The vision and the intended purpose of the Nordic Federation of General Practice are to:

- ensure that the congresses and SJPHC keep high common Nordic professional standards and profile and establish a professionally fruitful collaboration between them;
- build up a logistic experience of NC and strengthen the colleges' joint responsibility for issuing the SJPHC and for organizing and arranging the NC;
- develop and maintain a sound financial situation for the SJPHC and for the NC, and in this connection develop and implement common guidelines regarding sponsorship of the congresses.

It is also our intention through this organizational initiative to emphasize the important role and responsibility of the national colleges to keep on strengthening links between the academic and clinical field of general practice, on both the national and the Nordic level. The national colleges are important arenas for discussions concerning the development of general practice. The colleges must make sure that important issues are put on the agenda and they must make the necessary practical arrangements for discussions to be held and papers to be published. The framework of the new federation will offer an opportunity for issues of mutual interest to be discussed at the Nordic level.

It is our hope that the federation will prove to be profitable and useful for the academic as well as the clinical field in Nordic general practice.

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