

## **WONCA Statement on the Value of Exchanges in Family Medicine**



*Definition: an “exchange” refers to a structured observational placement of one doctor (the “visitor”) to a Family Medicine practice or clinic, in a country other than the one they normally work in, under the guidance of a designated “host”, a Family Doctor who serves as supervisor and mentor.*

Family Medicine exchanges set the stage for the development of Family Medicine on a global level, fostering the personal and professional development of all involved.

The exchanges promoted by WONCA Young Doctors' Movements are built on an educational program designed with specific learning objectives identified by the visitor, and agreed between host and visitor. After the exchange, the visitor is assessed by the host and produces a report on his/her exchange. Host practices are required to meet certain criteria to be acceptable to host visitors.

The host practices offered as exchange sites are those that have been assessed by the national representatives. In order to guarantee the quality and the safety of the host practices, the appointed national representative is linked to the regional Young Doctors' Movement and, in some cases, to the national Family Medicine Association or College.

Healthcare, organisation and provision, differs from country to country. This diversity enriches the experience of the participant who is able to learn how healthcare responds to the contextual needs of the local population - a cultural exchange which enhances one's breadth of experience in life and professional terms. Medically, an experience that may see the visitor returning home with strategies to improve the practice and implementation of family medicine in their own region and possible country.

Exchanges in family medicine are effective and efficient ways to promote bilateral knowledge exchange, facilitate the sharing of experiences and expertise. Encouraging exchanges as part of postgraduate family medicine training will empower young doctors.