

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a pleasure and a great honour to tell you something about Dr. Sam Everington, "Dr. Sam" for his local community at Bromley-by-Bow in London.

Dr. Sam is working for more than 20 years as a GP principal in a health centre used by the United Kingdom government as a model for "Health Living Centers". Bromley-by-Bow is one of the most deprived areas in the country with multiple social problems. The Health Living Centers pioneer a new approach to health care, integrating general practitioners and other health professionals with community projects – linking health with education and enterprise, environment with training and family support – serving as a focus for the energy and ability for the local community and helping regenerate the area. The health centre is not just a "health centre": it is an art gallery, community centre, public park, a café, a nursery, a community cinema and a GP practice all rolled into one. Dr. Sam believes that you cannot separate patient health from their environment, employment, housing, education and creativity and therefore an holistic approach is needed. The centre is a unique partnership between the private, public and voluntary sector. The health centre reflects the ethnicity of its locality, with four out of 10 patients form the Bengali community. It holds diabetic fairs, it offers joint ante-natal child health clinics, were there are different groups e.g. "the art and asthma group" that creates sculptures of allergens that cause asthma. Empowerment of patients is a central strategy.

Dr. Sam believes unemployment makes people unwell. So, projects that contribute to social cohesion e.g. by letting work people together, are of utmost importance.

Dr. Sam spends 4 days a week in the practice. Moreover, he is involved in contacts and discussions about the future of primary health care in the United Kingdom and has published a lot in the scientific literature. He is continually working at the improvement of the quality of care using a broad strategy, and tries to contribute to solidarity in the local community, which is not easy nowadays in a multi-ethnic environment in the United Kingdom. Health promotion is central in his work as a practitioner in the primary health care team, and he relies on the possibilities patients have themselves in order to improve their health status.

By giving the WONCA-Europe award of excellence in health care "the five star doctor", to dr. Sam Everington, the jury wants to make clear that at a time where the focus is on things that are measurable, in this time of market competition and privatization, the physician has an important task to contribute to those things you can't measure: to help people to live their lives, utilizing their own possibilities, diagnosing diseases in a comprehensive way, and discussing treatments with the active participation of patients. All of us involved in a development of family medicine in Europe may be inspired by what dr. Sam does.

Dr. Sam, in 1999, you received the member of the British Empire from Her Majesty Queen Elisabeth for services to primary care. Today you receive the WONCA-Europe Award of Excellence in Health Care: the 5 star doctor from the president of WONCA Europe, Dr. Igor Svab. Congratulations!

Prof. Jan De Maeseneer, M.D., Ph.D.
Florence, 27.08.2006