

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

INAUGURATION SPEECH

JAN 18TH 2014

SOONG'S GREAT WALL

President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, His Excellency Anthony Thomas Aquinas Carmona, SC,

First Lady Her Excellency Reema Carmona

Deputy Mayor of San Fernando Mr Junia Regrello and Mrs Regrello

Independent Senator Dr Victor Wheeler and Mrs Wheeler

The Honorable Member of Parliament for San Fernando West Mrs Carolyn Seepersad Bachan and Mr Bachan

Former Minister of Education and Representative of the Honorable Member of Parliament for San Fernando East Mrs Hazel Manning

Former First Lady and Honorary Member of the T&TMA Zalayhar Hassanali

Immediate Past President of the T&TMA and VP of the Commonwealth Medical Association, Dr Rohit Dass and Mrs Dass

Our Honorees Dr Sandeep Kumar and Mrs Kumar, Prof Samuel Ramsewak and Mrs Ramsewak

President of the Medical Board of Trinidad and Tobago, Dr Dev Ramoutar and Mrs Ramoutar

President of the Commonwealth Medical Association, Dr Solaiman Juman and Mrs Juman

Immediate Past President of the T&TMA and VP of the Commonwealth Medical Association, Dr Rohit Dass and Mrs Dass

Past Presidents of the T&TMA

Other Specially Invited guests

Colleagues

Ladies and Gentlemen

Good evening

It is a great honor and Privilege for me to assume the role of President of The Trinidad and Tobago Medical Association. I am the 82nd President to take this Oath and I am indeed humbled to follow in the footsteps of luminaries.

On June 7th 1974, during the Third Session of the Third Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago, Act 24 was passed by the House of Representatives and on June 25th, 1974, this Act was passed by the Senate and contained provisions of the Constitution of the T&TMA.

This year, 2014, marks the 40th year of our Constitution and we, the Executive and Members of the Trinidad and Tobago Medical Association, are grateful for the Immediate Past President Dr Rohit Dass and his Executive, and all the Past Presidents, and their Executives many of whom are here today, from South, North, Central Trinidad and Tobago (APPLAUSE), their vision, their sacrifice and their faith in our noble profession have made the T&TMA a successful Association.

Over my six years as a Member of this Association, moving up the ranks from South Branch's Member, South Branch's Secretary and Treasurer, South Branch's Chairperson, General Council Member then Vice President, I saw this Association as many other young doctors do - as a committed group and an advisory group . This group has now embarked on four fundamental principles to improve healthcare in our beloved nation: TEACH, TREAT, MENTOR AND ADVOCATE. In order to continue being successful in these pursuits we must strive to be on the cutting edge of knowledge, information and technology as it relates to our field.

It was Peter W Carmel in his inaugural address as President of the American Medical Association who reminded his colleagues that: "In no other field is the

pursuit of knowledge more critical than in the field of medicine. New diseases, new therapies, new procedures are being discovered daily and we must continually master new knowledge, because, in our profession knowledge makes the difference between life and death. But of what use is knowledge without caring. When our patients come to us they are at their most vulnerable, so, as doctors, we must combine knowledge and caring at all times. As each and every one of us seek to make our individual and collective contribution to our society and the world at large.”

Louis Pasteur the French Chemist and Microbiologist said it this way “Chance favors the prepared mind Lets keep our minds prepared by being open to continuous learning.”

With these things in mind we must also be aware of the moral imperative of ethics in our chosen profession. Cecil B. Wilson in his inaugural speech as President of the World Medical Association (2012-2013) said “As doctors we must have moral authority and speak out with moral authority on matters, as we set standards for professionalism and medical ethics AS WE LIVE UP TO THE MEDICAL CODE OF ETHICS AND THE DECLARATION OF GENEVA – ALSO KNOWN AS THE MODERN “HIPPOCRATIC OATH”

During the next few months as President of this prestigious Association, this Executive will continue in the footsteps of the Past Executives and at the same time introduce some new strategies to keep the T&TMA committed to the Constitutional mandate to serving our country.

A few plans are as follows:

1. STRATEGIC PLANNING

- To hold **Annual Strategic planning meetings**. This will be a follow-up to the strategic planning meeting organized by Dr Solaiman Juman, President of the Commonwealth Medical Association (CMA) and his CMA 23rd Triennial Meeting/MRC Planning team in July 2013. We hope to hold this meeting in Trinidad and in Tobago. From this meeting, we will be able to develop key strategies to address the T&TMA’s objectives. These must be

SMART i.e. Specific (S), Measurable (M), Achievable (A), Realistic (R) and Time-bound (T). Then together as a team, we, the T&TMA, will develop a proper deployment plan to implement these strategies.

- As part of the strategic planning of any successful organization, succession planning is necessary. This year, we want to start a “**MENTORING PARTNERSHIP**” to cultivate the next generation of leaders. In each T&TMA Standing Committee, a Senior T&TMA member will be paired with a junior member as co-Chairpersons. The mentoring relationship will be one of learning, dialogue and challenge.

2. **MEMBERSHIP**

- To increase membership. The **Membership Committee**, under the diligent Chairmanship of Drs Anthony Changkit and Vishi Beharry, will continue on the T&TMA Membership drive over the next year. We have approximately 1800 doctors registered in Trinidad and Tobago and fewer than 50% are T&TMA members. There is a need to finalize Membership benefits to medical students, Residents and Physicians within the next few months. Let us come up with an inviting T&TMA Member Value Program. Let us trace members who have defaulted, talk with them and renew their commitment to being part of this Association.

3. **Continued Medical Education and RESEARCH**

- To continue medical education and research. Under Dr Stacey Chamely, the assiduous Chairperson of the **Continued Medical Education (CME)** Standing Committee, we have successfully increased the number of CMEs by just over 50 % over the last three years, by partnering with local Associations such as ENT Society and Diabetic Association of Trinidad and Tobago as well as the renowned Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. All these CMEs are accredited by the American Academy of Continued Medical education. In spite of this we do not have maximum attendance at these CMEs and we still have not been able to make CMEs mandatory in Trinidad and Tobago as it is in developed countries.

- Team CME, our challenge this year is to engage doctors, so they realize it is important to become modernized with recent advancements and research findings. The Clinicians must then be able to contextualize the best available research evidence and integrate it in their practice. We MUST practice evidence based medicine.

We have already formed partnerships with the following for 2014 – National Radiotherapy Centre, ENT Society of Trinidad and Tobago, Caribbean Medical Providers Practicing Abroad (CMPPA), Pediatric Society, Gynecological and Obstetrical Society of Trinidad and Tobago (GOSTT) and South West Regional Health Authority (SWRHA).

We will also pursue strategies as follows:

We will continue downloading CME presentations, with the relevant consent, onto our website.

We will create an even more powerful presence in social networking sites like Facebook, MySpace and Twitter.

We will also adopt mobile strategies – text messaging, whatsapp, BBM.

It should be stressed that these internet/mobile strategies will not only advertise CME meetings or T&TMA events, but will also engage in feedback/ discussion fora.

4. MEDICAL ETHICS

- To remember the essentials of Honorable behaviour. **Medical Ethics** is a system of moral principles that apply values and judgments to the practice of medicine. Historically it can be traced to Hippocrates. For over 2000 years, we have been faced with challenges in medicine, but as Physicians we have to remember the essentials of Honorable behaviour. This year, we are hoping to have a National meeting centered on Medical Ethics- a collaboration between Doctors and Legal advisors.

5. ADVOCACY

- The T&TMA is aggressively involved in advocacy and we will continue to advocate for health care issues that affect us all.

Your Excellencies, Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen, these are a few of the plans for 2014 and we all need one another's support to make them happen. We unapologetically ask your assistance and support to realise these for no one can do this alone.

Tonight there are many persons I would like to thank- Almighty God, my parents, husband, family, friends and colleagues esp. those in the Internal Medicine Department at SFGH esp. Drs Ramcharan and Perot and in the DM Internal Medicine Program, UWI esp. Prof Terence Seemungal. My new found friends at the T&TMA...Thank you. Tobago Branch, esp. Drs Maria Dillon Remy and Rose Alfred- Thank you for your continued support.

I pray that God continues to strengthen us all so that we can continue to do His work.

Together, with faith, vision and commitment, let us work with all our Standing Committees.

Together, let us walk the path of action towards productive changes in healthcare, in our communities and in our twin island Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, as we go forward respecting tradition while we create a new future!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Thank you and God bless

DR LIANE CONYETTE
PRESIDENT OF T&TMA 2014