



A message from the new WGO President, Richard Kozarek

As incoming President of the World Gastroenterology Organization (WGO), it gives me pause to recognize that I am standing upon the shoulders of giants in the visage of all, but especially, our three most recent Past-Presidents: Eamonn Quigley, Guido Tytgat and Meinhard Classen. If that alone is not humbling, the persistence of weakness in the global economy, the paucity of GI products coming through the developmental pipeline, the retrenchment of educational support from our industry partners, and the progressive regulation of our educational offerings all add up to potential problems in continuing current programmatic activity and precluding additional new programs in the immediate future.

Despite this, I remain optimistic about the years to come. WGO and our London partners have just completed an enormously successful combined UEGW/World Congress of Gastroenterology that will hopefully be the business and educational model going forward. Specifically we look forward to Shanghai 2013 with our partners, APDWF, OMED, and the Federated Chinese Societies, our local host. Moreover, we plan to initiate biyearly educational meetings with our national or regional societies between World Congresses with the first such meeting beginning in 2011. If interested, get in line, send me your ideas, get involved.

Support for global guidelines, World Digestive Health Day, Train the Trainers, IDCA, the Outreach Committee, and Training Centers goes without saying and you will see a limited expansion of the latter if we can assure funding from industry or philanthropy. In fact, thanks to a 5-year grant from Fujinon South America, we will inaugurate our 14th Training Center under

Herbert Burgos' direction in San Jose, Costa Rica in 2010. Even without a significant expansion, work will continue on integrating educational offerings and cross-fertilization of meetings through the Internet II and "adoption" of centers by national societal members (e.g., Australian support for the Fiji center). Look for innovation from member societies to include Training Center access to the internet-based Educational Universe, courtesy of the American College of Gastroenterology and access to web-based Masters Degree for trainers through a program developed by Sociedad Española de Patología Digestiva. And continue to look for volunteers, equipment, and time commitments from a myriad of our members committed to improving global health through training and education in our geographically dispersed, culturally unique, and variably resourced Training Centers.

We will do all this with your help, your individual visions, your connections, or cold, hard cash, be it in Euros, Dollars, Pesos, Yuan, Yen We will help to finance this vision through the World Gastroenterology Organization Foundation under Bernard Levin's leadership in which we hope to tap resources from industry, foundations, government grants, and those individuals fortunate enough to have the means to share with those individuals and WGO programs who do not.

I started this inaugural presidential message by stating that I am humbled to help provide direction and service to the WGO, along with our Executive, and other societal leaders. I am ending it by stressing that each of you has a role to play in training, education, and improving GI health, not only in your own university or practice, but globally.

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