



Peers for Progress

Peer Support Around the World

A program of the American Academy of Family Physicians Foundation

January, 2011

Dear Friends,

We hope that your holidays were joyous and relaxing, and that 2011 is looking promising to you. The past year was very successful for Peers for Progress, the program of the American Academy of Family Physicians Foundation dedicated to promoting peer support for prevention, health, and health care around the world. In the following paragraphs, we would like to share some highlights in Peers for Progress' own support and in the network we are developing around the world.

In many ways, 2010 saw impressive advances in our networking and promotion of exchange of knowledge about peer support around the world. A major activity was the October meeting in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia that included not only our fourteen Peers for Progress grantees from nine countries, but additional representatives of other leading peer support programs and leaders of key organizations interested in peer support, including the International Diabetes Federation and the World Organization of Family Physicians. Over 60 individuals convened in Kuala Lumpur, representing Australia, Cambodia, Cameroon, Chile, China, South Africa, India, Iraq, Malaysia, the Netherlands, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Uganda, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Over the three-day meeting, they formed a learning community of collaborating experts spanning key areas of health (e.g., diabetes, cancer, HIV, maternal and child health, mental health) and settings of peer support programs (e.g., rural populations, programs for women and children, ethnic minorities). They identified and discussed critical aspects of peer support interventions, their effects, dissemination, and sustainability. Most gratifying, there was tremendous enthusiasm in this impressive and diverse group for the value of the kind of exchange they had begun. Already, several international collaborative projects have emerged from the connections cultivated in Kuala Lumpur. So, this meeting gave clear endorsement to the value of Peers for Progress' dedication to growing a network of peer support leaders from around the world.

Other global networking during 2010 included a series of trips to Australia, Chile, China, France, Germany, and Mexico along with contacts in the United Kingdom and the Netherlands. In each of these, we met with national organizations interested in peer support and in working with us to enhance both the quality of their peer support programs as well as their recognition and sustained funding. A prime example of this was our visit to Beijing in August to participate in the *International Symposium on Diabetes Education and Management of the Chinese Diabetes Society* that attracted over one thousand participants. In addition to presenting several lectures on diabetes patient education and peer support, we met with diabetes leaders from China, pictured here, who were interested in developing peer support programs, such as among older adults in Anhui



Provence or as extensions of diabetes education classes in Nanjing. This represents something of a new direction for healthcare and prevention in China. In addition to those interested in diabetes, we are also developing links with leaders in mental health and in prevention, especially smoking cessation, both areas to which peer support may provide great benefit. We are pursuing collaboration with a number of those who attended the meeting and planning a follow-up meeting through the 2011 Symposium to be held in August in Nanjing.

Peers for Progress also extended our networking in 2010 through collaboration with the Johnson & Johnson Diabetes Institute, established in a number of countries around the world to provide training in diabetes patient education for nurses and other professionals. The Institute's focus on training professionals is a natural complement to that of Peers for Progress on the role of peer support. Through the Institute, we presented a webinar on the role of peer support in diabetes care to over 100 participants this past December, and have begun planning with its leaders for a follow-up presentation in 2011 that will highlight applied examples of peer support programs and their adaptability to various populations, settings, cultures, and other contexts.

2010 also saw expansion of the Peers for Progress Global Advisory Board with its responsibility for help in strategic development. In addition to continuing representatives from the YMCAs of America (Lynne Vaughn, Senior Vice President, Chief Innovation Officer) and the American Association of Diabetes Educators (Lana Vukovljak, CEO, Amparo Gonzalez, former President), the Board has been joined by Bert van den Bergh from the Executive Board of Iroko Holdings and a retired Eli Lilly executive with extensive global experience, and Ronald Aubert, Ph.D., Vice President of Clinical Analytics and Outcomes Research at Medco Health Solutions Inc. and author of one of the first major research papers documenting the value of ongoing patient support in diabetes management. Additional new additions to the Peers for Progress family in 2010 included Mu Chieh "Maggy" Coufal who joined the Program Development Center at UNC-Chapel Hill as Program Manager. A native of Taiwan, Ms. Coufal has masters degrees in both public health and organizational management, and has been enormously helpful in expanding our ability to reach out to colleagues in China.

Turning to organizational growth and funding, in November Peers for Progress was pleased to be one of four projects initially funded by the Bristol-Myers Squibb Foundation as part of its new, \$100 million initiative, *Together on Diabetes*. We received \$5 million to support a project that will show the value of peer support as a strategy for reaching individuals and communities in need from the "patient-centered medical home."

Especially exciting, this new project will entail collaboration with the National Council of La Raza, the nation's largest Hispanic civil rights and advocacy organization. Focusing on delivering services to Latino communities, we will work with NCLR to show the value of "promotoras" as peer supporters in diabetes care. The award also includes funding to establish a national collaborative network of programs interested in peer support approaches. This will add to our networking and promotion working with NCLR and its 300 affiliates and constituents around the country. Also joining in this project is TransforMed, the subsidiary of the American Academy of Family Physicians that is dedicated to helping primary medical care groups develop their patient centered medical home programs and services.

The funding from Bristol-Myers Squibb Foundation and collaboration with the National Council of La Raza are great milestones for Peers for Progress as they signify that the program is gaining respect and recognition as a major force in peer support both in the United States and around the world. This grant also expands our funding base beyond the Eli Lilly and Company

Foundation, further solidifying our ability grow and sustain Peers for Progress for many years to come.

With a growing set of leaders in peer support and health interested in working with us around the world, new partners in the National Council of La Raza, and expanded funding, Peers for Progress is excited that 2011 will see great accomplishments in our mission, accelerating best practices in peer support around the world. We hope the year is a great one for you as well and the many fine causes we all serve, and look forward to being in contact with you as the year unfolds.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ed Fisher". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Edwin B. Fisher, Ph.D.
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