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Press Release World Family Doctors Day – 19th May 2023

Family Doctors: The Heart of Healthcare

The Malta College of Family Doctors (MCFD) and the Association of Private Family Doctors (APFD), on the occasion of world family doctor's day, look forward for further developments that strengthen family medicine as the heart of health care. This is so because Family doctors play a crucial role in promoting the health and well-being of individuals and communities. Through their dedication, compassion, and expertise they are a trusted source of support for patients and families.

Malta follows the trend of contemporary European countries as having a Family Doctor-based primary health care system as the base of its national healthcare system. This way of doing things calls for a long-term relationship between family doctors and patients, a holistic approach to healthcare, coordination of care for a patient's healthcare needs, advocacy for patients tackling the healthcare system and education on various healthcare needs.

The two Voluntary Organisations remind that Family doctors are typically the first point of contact for patients seeking medical care. They provide continuous and comprehensive care to patients throughout their lives, building long-term relationships with them. This allows them to understand their patients' medical history, lifestyle, and social circumstances, and offer personalized care and support.

In a contemporary life-style of narrow specialisation and even sub-specialisation Family Doctors take a holistic approach to healthcare, considering not just a patient's physical health, but also their emotional, social, and psychological well-being. They focus on preventive care, screening, and early detection of illnesses to help patients maintain good health and prevent chronic diseases.

The trend for ever more healthcare services from various entities, Family Doctors serve as a central point of coordination for a patient's healthcare needs. They work with other healthcare providers, such as specialists in hospitals, to ensure that patients receive the best possible care and avoid duplication of services.

Within the healthcare system, Family Doctors are advocates for their patients, helping them navigate the healthcare system and access the resources they need. They also educate patients about their health, including how to manage chronic conditions, make healthy lifestyle choices, and prevent illness.

The APFD and the MCFD are committed to help national authorities to deliver accessible, equitable, and sustainable, high-quality care. They point out how the electoral programmes of the 3 main parties shared this reasoning and included pledges to give more tools to family doctors so that they can deliver more. Consequently, the MCFD and the APFD are reaching out to national authorities to accomplish the electoral promises to enable our society to move forward.

Notes

1. World Family Doctor Day, 19th May, was first declared by WONCA in 2010 and has become a day to highlight the role and contribution of family doctors in health care systems around the world. The event is an opportunity to acknowledge the central role of our specialty in the delivery of personal, comprehensive and continuing health care for all of our patients. It is also a chance to celebrate the progress being made in family medicine and the special contributions of family doctors globally.
2. WONCA is an acronym for the World Organization of National Colleges, Academies and Academic Associations of General Practitioners/Family Physicians. WONCA's short name is World Organization of Family Doctors. The Mission of WONCA is to improve the quality of life of the peoples of the world through defining and promoting its values, including respect for universal human rights and including gender equity, and by fostering high standards of care in general practice/family medicine. <https://www.globalfamilydoctor.com>
3. The Malta College of Family Doctors (MCFD) is a Voluntary Organisation (VO/0973) that strives to improve the academic and clinical performance of family doctors (known as “it-tobba tal-familja” or “general practitioners”) and the standards of primary health care in our country.
4. The Association of Private Family Doctors (APFD) on the other hand, is a Voluntary Organisation (VO/1803) that strives to improve family medicine and primary health care in our country on behalf of the private family doctors (known as “it-tobba tal-familja” or “general practitioners”) and their patients.

Dr Edward Zammit

Honorary President MCFD

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