

Dr. Ara Tekian:

The Brainchild Behind Medical Education



This coming July, Dr. Ara Tekian will be joining the venerated list of key speakers at the 11th Armenian Medical World Congress, he will be speaking about Education and Patient Safety. His accolades and accomplishments reach far and wide. Currently, he is an Associate Professor and the Director of International Affairs at the Department of Medical Education (DME), and the Associate Dean for the International Affairs at the College of Medicine, the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC). He joined DME in 1992, and is involved in both teaching courses offered in the Master's of Health Professions

Education (MHPE) program and advising graduate students. He also teaches one of the major courses in the Masters in Patient Safety Leadership program. Dr. Tekian was instrumental in the creation of the Masters of Public Health (MPH) program when it was established in mid-nineties.

"Medical education is my passion, and I enjoy teaching and conducting faculty development activities on various topics in health professions education. The greatest satisfaction I get is when I see positive changes happening at institutions as a result of the training that I provide to the faculty and the Administration," Dr. Tekian said.

Prior to joining DME, he was the founding Director of the Medical Education Department at King Saud University, College of Medicine in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. For nearly 20 years he served as a consultant to the World Health Organization (WHO) Eastern Mediterranean Regional Office (EMRO) for projects in the Division of Development of Human Resources for Health. He was also a consultant to the Ministries of Health and Education in most of the Eastern Mediterranean countries and has established a number of medical education departments and units in the Eastern Mediterranean countries. To add to the vertiginous list of his posts and positions, he also served as President of the Division of Education in the Professions of the American Educational Research Association, and authored the book, *Innovative Simulations for Assessing Professional Competence: From Paper-and-Pencil to Virtual Reality*.

"I work 14 - 16 hours a day, and the activities that I am involved in include teaching, administration, research, and international consulting," Dr. Tekian explained. "I believe in what I am doing, my contributions are always highly appreciated, and the positive impact that I have on individuals' professional lives keeps me going."

As an internationally recognized scholar and leader in health professions education, he has organized and conducted over 150 workshops in more than 40 countries and 55 cities. His consultations and workshops have focused on curriculum development, assessment, program evaluation, and patient safety. He has received numerous honors and awards. He has been the recipient of several awards, including the Gold Medal Award, which is one of the most prestigious international awards in medical education.

"International recognition by all your peers is one of the greatest honors that one could ever receive in his field. It is the ultimate stamp of approval for excellence," Dr. Tekian said.

He was also instrumental in creating the combined MD/MPH dual track between Yerevan State Medical University and American University of Armenia (AUA). The MHPE is one of the strongest programs at AUA, providing the theory, practice, and gives students the opportunity to be enrolled in research. Roughly 90% of all published research in international refereed journals emanate only from the College of Health Sciences (CHS) MPH program. Dr. Tekian notes that this gives a lot of visibility and credibility to AUA.

Dr. Arsinee Kalfayan, PharmD, CME Chairwoman of the 11th AMWC emphasizes the importance of having Dr. Tekian share his expertise amongst the echelon go health practitioners. "Patient Safety espouses continuous cycles of learning, reporting of adverse events or near misses, dissemination of lessons learned, and the establishment of cultures that are trusted to not cast unfair blame. The patient safety field marries principles of adult education and effective behavioral learning with the traditional approaches of the medical profession. We are honored to have Dr. Tekian educate us to improve our competence and performance to First Do No Harm."

Despite his very busy schedule, he continues to teach at AUA and credits the success of the program to past AUA Presidents and the support of Louise Simone Manougian, and the AGBU. However, he notes that during recent years, he's seen corruption starting to penetrate AUA. He's noticed the releasing of qualified professors and leaders, the recruitment of mediocre faculty and administrators, and the classifying funding organization's agenda ahead of the public good and interest. "Silencing the voices of people who speak the truth, thus damaging the hard-gained reputation that once was achieved." Dr. Tekian explained.

He believes the young generation will be a buffer against such mismanagement. "I am inspired by their motivation, intelligence, creativity, hard work. They want to make a positive difference and contribute to the advancement of their country," Dr. Tekian said. "They do not have any hidden agendas, and have an open mind to understand and learn about new innovations in their fields. They have the determination to minimize the influence of the various political pressures affecting the quality of the education and health care. Sometimes they feel hopeless, but the Diaspora could play a very important role empowering and supporting them to promote democracy at all levels and stop the cancerous corruption."

Advanced registration for the 11th Armenian Medical World Congress ends on May 1, 2013. For more information and to register please visit our website at www.aamsc.com/congress.