

The Challenges of Tomorrow

OVER the past ten years the Ministry of Health faced serious and fundamental challenges and overcame them. The results were a series of successes. It established a modern and comprehensive Primary Health Care System in well equipped and staffed Health Centers. It built the Salmaniya Medical Center complex of 650 beds establishing, thereafter, a sophisticated secondary medical care. As a result of co-ordination with Arab Gulf States and co-operation with several medical centers of excellence it provided for the citizens an efficient tertiary medical care. It emphasized preventive health programs with notable efforts in health education, comprehensive immunization, food and drug control, and occupational health. Finally, to provide the needed manpower for all of the above activities it established, as a joint venture with the American University of Beirut a reputable College of Health Sciences which time will prove that it shall be second to none in the Middle East.

Those were the challenges of the past. What about the challenges of the future ? If dreams can ever be confined to limits, the most prominent ones will be the following :

- (1) To initiate the programs and activities that will eventually lead to making Salmaniya Medical Center an accredited teaching hospital. The very important role that Bahrain played in convincing eighteen Arab countries to agree to the establishment of the Arab Board of Medical Specialities makes the overcoming of this challenge a mandatory.
- (2) To play our major role in the establishment of the Medical College that hopefully will be part of the Gulf University. Of necessity and for the sake of the future of both the Medical College and the Ministry of Health, Salmaniya Medical Center must become one of the University Teaching Hospitals.

In order not to dilute the importance of the above two challenges no other ones shall be mentioned at this time. For those two steps do not only need more effort, but will also need a basic change in the minds and hearts of all of us, especially the Bahraini doctors. To establish a teaching hospital and a Medical College, it will mean a fundamental reorientation of everything. Firstly, Salmaniya Medical Center and the Health Centers will be expected to be both service and teaching oriented institutions. Accordingly, every activity of today has to be modified. Academic atmosphere must prevail. Secondly, all the workers must not only know how to render services, but also how to teach. To become a teacher, man needs to introduce radical changes in his life. Thirdly, Medical Research will then become a necessity and not a luxury. The skills, the vast knowledge, the time and the dedication that will be needed cannot be sufficiently emphasized.

To achieve the above, the Ministry of Health, in close co-operation with Bahrain Medical Society, will soon launch several programs, activities, and even wars. As in the past, some will adapt to the new times and move with us to the new horizons and some will simply remain behind. It is with the above in mind that we welcome the appearance of the Bahrain Medical Bulletin. It is a gesture of dedication, symbol of the future and another step in that long, long journey of thousands of miles.

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