

Your college, your view



"When I think of the ICGP, I think European, youthful, focused, quality assured and accountable. When I look at its training programmes, eLearning courses, CME networks, I see a standard-setting specialty. When I reflect on my 30 years + in general practice I am grateful to the ICGP for the opportunities afforded to me in the above."

Michael Griffin, Limerick

"The ICGP has moved general practice from its position as a Cinderella discipline of old, to a recognised medical specialty. For this reason, amongst others, GP training schemes consistently are able to attract graduates of the highest calibre. Into the future the next challenge in developing the specialty will be for Irish general practice and the ICGP to develop capacity in research. This will help to further define our specialty in its own terms, rather than basing ourselves on science derived in the secondary and tertiary care contexts. In recognition of this, the college has appointed a director of research, and supports GPs and GP registrars in undertaking research. Furthermore, the college has established avenues for getting research into practice through the small group CME network, the summer school and distance based learning opportunities, to name a few. Ultimately these developments are for the benefit of patients, and I am of the opinion that the ICGP has served both general practice and its patients admirably."

Scott Walkin, Mayo

"The college has immeasurably encouraged and supported practitioners in practising life-long learning. This it has done in so many different ways – CME groups, distance learning courses, summer school, etc."

Johnny Loughnane, Limerick

"I first got heavily involved in the college in the run up to the 1998 WONCA conference in Dublin. There was a huge mobilisation of all members at grassroots level who had previously only had contact with the ICGP through local faculty and CME meetings. I remember the excitement and enthusiasm around that time and great pride among college members that the conference was a huge success. Because our faculty (Merrion) was close to the RDS, many of us took delegates to our homes and also organised lots of activities including a hill-walking trip up the Wicklow Mountains, which proved very popular. Membership of the college has provided a link to other GPs across Ireland. At the start of my career in general practice an experienced GP trainer told me: "General practice was easy to do badly but difficult to do well". The college enables us to do our jobs well. The impact of the college has been huge. It has united GPs across the country, kept us up to date with developments in general practice and gives us pride in what we do."

Brian Meade, Stillorgan, Co Dublin

"The importance of the ICGP can never be underestimated. It has defined the role and the importance of general practice. It has led to general practitioners being recognised as the specialists they are, by not only other specialties but, more importantly by the GPs themselves."

Ilona Duffy, Monaghan

"The foundation of the Irish College of General Practitioners was an important milestone in my professional development. I began my vocational training in general practice as part of the second cohort of trainees to enter the newly-established training scheme that was founded by the Dublin Regional Committee of the Irish Institute of General Practice. They were exciting days in the evolution of Irish general practice. I was very fortunate at that time to come into contact with several great innovators in general practice. These included my trainer Aongus O'Rourke, James McCormick, Manne Berber, John Mason, Michael Flynn, Bartley Sheehan, Donal Burke and John Fleetwood, to name but a few. Sadly all of these great doctors are no longer with us but each of them contributed enormously to the creation of our college. I look back with great fondness to those exciting days. The college is now acknowledged as an integral part of the medical establishment. Sometimes I wish it were more radical but that feeling may simply reflect my age and my recollections of those heady days of innovation in the late '70s and early '80s. The college has always been and will remain my favourite medical organisation".

Leonard Condren, Dublin

"The founding of the college coincided with my return to Ireland from a sojourn in Australia and England. When I left in 1979, GP training was embryonic here. The highlight of my time away, in an academic sense, had been my GP trainee year in Bedfordshire. I was inspired by my trainer, a concept I had never come across before. I was lucky to get an offer of a partnership in Sligo, where I mingled with figures such as Paul Money and Eileen Caulfield. I did not know at that time that these two people would turn out to have great influences on GP training and college development respectively, and on me. The college emerged as the single greatest force for the good of Irish general practice and, in my opinion, for patients. GP training was established, and quickly it became the preferable, and then the only way to train for general practice in Ireland. The likes of Bill Shannon and James McCormick were the standard bearers and opinion formers. Four-year training (the brainchild of Paul Money) was piloted in Sligo, and again, after some time, became the established way. This, to my knowledge, happened here before anywhere else, a little known fact. None of this could have happened without the college. Such things are the envy of other medical colleagues, as well as other professionals. The commencement of CME and the general practice university departments were other highlights. Still to do? We must be as relevant as possible for the average GP, particularly the older GP. NEGs has been a great idea. We will continue to have to prove the case for general practice (and rightly so), and particularly its strengthening in inner cities and remote rural areas. I believe it is the college's role to adopt a policy on an equitable health system and to build on the enormous public satisfaction that exists for us. Our strength is our numbers."

Roddy Quinn, Sligo

"My involvement with the College started out with attending faculty meetings and then being asked to be faculty secretary in the early 90s. I was a new kid on the block back then but getting involved locally helped break the ice for me. Attending the AGMs and doing a few educational courses gave me an appreciation of all the work the college does on behalf of GPs. I am proud to be a member and value the friendships I have made. Like membership of a gym, you get out of it what you put into it. If you haven't done so already, get involved in the next 25 years of the College."

Mel Bates, Dublin

