



Editorial Letter

The First Annual National Vietnam Medical Education Conference “Preparing the 21st Century Physician”

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We are delighted to introduce the Special Issue for the medical education derived from the 1st National Vietnam Medical Education Conference: “Preparing the 21st Century Physician”. The First Annual National Vietnam Medical Education Conference was held on 2-3 December, 2017, by the Vietnam Ministry of Health, University of Medicine and Pharmacy in Ho Chi Minh City, and the Improving Access, Curriculum and Teaching in Medical Education and Emerging Diseases (IMPACT-MED) Alliance, which is supported by United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and implemented by Partnership for Health Advancement Vietnam, a collaboration between Harvard Medical School, the Brigham & Women’s Hospital and the Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center. It has attracted approximately 300 leaders in the medical education, faculties and students from Vietnam and around the world.

This conference comes at an exciting time in the socio-economic development of Vietnam. The Vietnamese health sector has made enormous strides in the control of communicable diseases, increasing the life expectancy and increasing access to the health care for its population over the past 40 years since the reunification of the country. In July 2017, Vietnam became a middle-income country, and with this new status comes new health challenges, which if not addressed, will impede the continued development of the country. Non-communicable diseases, a rapidly aging population, emerge threats of pandemics, environmental pollution, and climate change are all at our doorstep. Additionally, an increasingly connected society that demands a high-quality healthcare, the government’s plan for Universal Health Care, and the desire for regional and

an international integration all represent the challenges and opportunities that we must tackle. Addressing these challenges and opportunities starts with transforming the health workforce. There is an urgent need to update the country’s system of health education including university curricula and transforming approaches to teaching and learning to train health professionals who can adapt and react to the health challenges and realize the opportunities that are presented.

A comprehensive curriculum reform is difficult. However, we can build upon the experience of previous, smaller-scale reform projects, and capitalize on the investments and support from the highest level of government to transform our health education system. We have built strong partnerships among the network of universities and colleges in Vietnam to support each other, and we also have support from international partners. Education reform is a necessity for Vietnam. The conversations and discussions that we have at this inaugural conference will pave the way towards the transformation of our health education system. The conference aims to provide a forum for sharing innovations and advances in the medical education, stimulate discussions among medical education leaders, inspire further innovations, and foster a community of medical educators invested in advancing medical education research and quality improvement.

This entire volume is devoted to select the manuscripts, which was generated from the conference. We hope that it will be productive, and you will be inspired, energized and motivated to continue the efforts towards health education reform for your university/college, and for the country of Vietnam.

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