



# Christian Academy of African Physicians

## CAAP

### **The Legacy of Christian Compassionate Healthcare in Africa**

Church hospitals and health systems provide a substantial portion of the healthcare in Africa despite little financial assistance or government subsidies. South of the Sahara, church hospitals and clinics account for 30 – 60% of the health services delivered, especially in rural areas where the majority of the population lives. African Christian health institutions have a long history of training well-qualified nurses to run dispensaries and staff hospitals. Now, these health systems need residency trained doctors to staff their hospitals and clinics. A generalist with one year of internship training might stay for a year or two in a rural site but will often move back to the city for specialty training, take a job with a higher paying NGO, or become part of the “brain drain” to the West. While most African countries offer residency training, they rarely have openings for more than about 20% of the graduates from their medical schools in any given year. Without government sponsorship, church facility-based doctors lack opportunities for further training and are thus unable to advance in their career. CAAP seeks to support the development of church hospital residency training programs for African Christian physicians who want to work in underserved areas, living out the gospel in Africa.

### **Relationship Centered**

Medical education mission flows from obedience to Christ’s command and is embedded in relationships – personal relationships when caring for patients and when mentoring and discipling engaged learners. Short-term missions and “medical camps” may provide episodic assistance, but a long-term commitment to a people and a place creates lasting change and grows Christ’s kingdom. Together missional physicians and healthcare workers in the African church can learn and serve together to address the medical and spiritual disparities where only 3% of the world’s healthcare workers serve 25% of the world’s medical needs.

### **The Birth of CAAP**

In 2015, a preconference of western and African academics in Family Medicine, Internal Medicine and Pediatrics was convened at the annual Global Missions Health Conference in Louisville, KY to discuss the utility and feasibility of starting medical residency training programs in church hospitals in Africa. The consensus opinion expressed was that “Graduate medical education is an excellent means of building the capacity of health care systems in low and middle-income countries ...and a growing way for physicians in high income countries to get involved in integral mission.” (cf. Merry S., Dahlman B., Shannon, K. et al. *Starting and resourcing family and internal medicine residency programs as integral mission*. [Christian Journal for Global Health](#), 3(2): 151-159, 2016.

Church hospitals in Africa have benefited from their surgery residency programs and could benefit from co-training residents in medical specialties. In 2003, through the collaborative efforts of Loma Linda University and the Christian Medical and Dental Association (CMDA), the non-denominational Pan-African Academy of Christian Surgeons (PAACS) was established to train “African physicians to become general surgeons who are willing to remain in Africa to meet the need (for surgeons).” With programs by 2020 in 11 church hospitals and over 100 graduates, surgical departments of these hospitals and others in their system are increasingly well-staffed. But hospitals and care systems also need family medicine, internal medicine, pediatric and emergency medicine physicians to complement the surgical teams and provide and support wholistic preventive and curative primary care.

CAAP was founded on Nov. 7, 2017 at Loma Linda University.

**The Vision Statement of CAAP:**

*"African physicians engaging healthcare systems to provide every person in their community compassionate care that exemplifies the healing power of Jesus."*

**The Mission Statement of CAAP:**

*"CAAP supports programs that teach and mentor African physicians and primary care providers to empower the Body of Christ to continue the teaching and healing ministry of the Great Physician."*

**CAAP Core Activities:**

- **Primary Care Curriculum Development and Repository**  
Develop and implement residency curricula for family medicine, internal medicine, pediatrics and emergency medicine. Encourage and collaborate with Christian Medical College Vellore and others to make available a 2-year diploma course for medical officers/GPs. Support improvement of clinical officer skills and integration.
- **Spiritual Curriculum Development and Repository**  
Develop through collaboration with PAACS and others to write, source, review and make available spiritual curriculum components.
- **Professional Development and Global Fellowship**  
Collaborate with others to provide faculty development resources online and in face-to-face seminars. Prepare Africa-based global health education fellowship for expatriates and African faculty.
- **Recruit, Prepare and Network Primary Care Faculty with Residency Programs**  
Help Christian primary care clinicians and academics to find their place of educational service and prepare them for cross-cultural clinical mentoring and discipleship.
- **Facilitate Short-term Teaching Trips**  
Facilitate visiting consultants and groups across primary care and medical specialties to teach in CAAP-affiliated residency programs.
- **Advanced Degrees in Public Health, Education and Other Training**  
Promote availability of modular, on-line training in public health or education that could lead to an advanced degree.
- **Residency Consultation, Support and Networking**  
Provide consultations to support the creation, strengthening and certifying of primary care training programs.

**Interested? We welcome individual and residency affiliations from Africa and global partners.**

The CAAP Executive Committee:

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