

AUBMC highlights latest medical advances and expansion plans during MEMA

Friday, April 23, 2010

The American University of Beirut inaugurated its 43rd Middle East Medical Assembly, on April 22, 2010, highlighting the latest advances in the field of medicine in addition to the medical center's expansion plans in multi-disciplinary research and clinical services and continuing education.



The opening ceremony took place in Assembly Hall on the evening of April 22, 2010, and was kicked off by Dr. Ibrahim Salti, the chairperson of the 43rd MEMA and head of Endocrinology, who gave a welcome speech in which he noted the importance of MEMA in helping doctors from Lebanon and the world exchange ideas and share the latest medical knowledge.

MEMA is one of the leading academic, international medical conferences in the region, bringing together Lebanese and internationally renowned experts to highlight the latest advances in the field of medicine.

Lectures and workshops will cover topics in dentistry, women's health, vascular disorders, neurosurgery, stem cell research, pediatrics, infectious diseases, hearing problems, migraine, and gastroenterology.

In parallel to the academic activities, a 2000-meter exhibition space is showcasing the latest pharmaceutical and medical-related products.

"From its earliest beginnings in 1867... medical education at AUB has focused on delivering quality and excellence in patient care and on providing first class education in medicine and biomedical research," said Dr. Mohamad Sayegh, the Raja N. Khuri dean of the Faculty of Medicine, during the opening ceremony. "Since July 2009 a new Leadership Team consisting of associate and assistant deans, program directors, administrative staff, and myself, has been working to drive AUB's Faculty of Medicine and Medical Center into their true potential for excellence in achieving academically-driven innovations in clinical service, medical education, and research."

Sayegh said that the medical center will create new multi-disciplinary centers of excellence by adding a heart and vascular center and a pediatric hospital to existing centers that focus on oncology and neuroscience. Moreover, Sayegh underlined the medical center and the faculty of medicine's dedication to playing a leadership role in continuing medical education in the region. Sayegh added: "Research is our constant top priority in the pursuit of excellence in medical education. What distinguishes AUB's Faculty of Medicine and Medical Center is its advanced clinical and biomedical research. We plan to create a clinical research institute for the pursuit of innovative multi-center clinical trials in collaboration with local and regional centers. Plans include basic research centers in the areas of stem cells, genetics, cancer biology, immunotherapeutics, and cardiovascular medicine," he said.

Plans to establish an AUBMC Partners Network are also underway. Such a network will strengthen cooperative clinical and research programs between AUBMC and other institutions in the region, noted Sayegh.

Renovations and facelifts to the medical center are also part of the expansion plans.

AUB President Peter Dorman welcomed participants, inviting them to take advantage of the international medical congress and their visit to "vivacious" Beirut. "The annual MEMA conference remains a major highlight of our academic calendar, an occasion for the major participants to share their research and become better informed about new directions in medical treatment," said Dorman. "The multiplicity of topics at this particular assembly offers the chance for doctors and practitioners to broaden their horizons and gain new knowledge both within and outside their field of specialization."

Health Minister Mohammed Jawad Khalifeh, who is also an AUBMC surgeon, lauded AUB's role in graduating top-notch doctors and providing them with continuing medical education opportunities.

Khalifeh noted that Lebanon is about to pass a law that will make continuing medical education for all doctors mandatory. He added that, in 2000, the country was the first Arab nation to have adopted an accreditation program and a three-tiered evaluation process for hospitals.

Meanwhile, Dr. George Abi Saad, President of the AUB Medical Alumni Chapter, pointed out that MEMA's aim is also to keep AUB alumni involved in campus activities, prodding them to contribute to the development of medicine at the University. He added that MEMA plays a major role in continuing medical education in the region.

Dr. Fuad Jubran, representing the Cleveland Clinic Foundation Center, also highlighted the importance of continuing medical education for the progress of the field and of doctors.

Dr. George Aftimos, who heads the Order of Physicians, underlined the work the order is doing to protect physicians' rights and enhance the standard of the profession.

MEMA participants will be eligible for certified Continuing Medical Education credits. The AUB Continuing Medical Education Office, in partnership with the Cleveland Clinic Foundation Center, will certify MEMA with AMA PRA, Category 1 credits, which are recognized by the American Medical Association. MEMA also complies with the Lebanese Order of Physicians Continuing Medical Education guidelines.