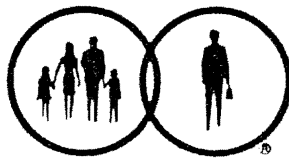


# **Personal Approaches to Patient Education**

To help members of the American Academy of Family Physicians consolidate their viewpoints and methods in the essential area of patient education, *AAFP Reporter* ran a series of five articles about how a cross-section of family physicians approach this responsibility.

The articles are reprinted in this leaflet, along with the highlights of a discussion by five family physicians on the subject, "Selecting Patient Education Materials," which appeared in the January 15, 1979 issue of *Patient Care* magazine.

We hope you find the material interesting and helpful. Please contact the Academy to share your ideas about making patient education more effective. Efforts are under way to develop a practical audiovisual program for AAFP sponsorship. Watch *AAFP Reporter* for details.



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## 'DOC,' Tour de Force of Patient Education, Making Impact

A tour de force of patient education is making an impact in Miami, Fla. Dr. Alan Blum, a Teaching Fellow in the Department of Family Medicine at the University of Miami School of Medicine, is waging a war on unhealthy habits and their promotion.

Under the acronym of DOC (Doctors Ought To Care), the patient education organization formed and charted its course in mid-1977. Blum, then a third-year resident, and a group of concerned colleagues gathered in his apartment one evening to consider what they could do, collectively, to improve public health, reduce medical costs and dispel some of the antihealth myths they felt were being used in advertising unhealthy commodities.

According to Dr. Blum, they were tired of hearing charges of malpractice and soaring health costs being leveled against doctors. They were tired of seeing doctors being generally portrayed as miscreants by the media who, said Blum, in the same breath accepted an inordinate amount of advertising to promote such antihealth agents as cigarettes, alcohol and "junk foods."

At this first meeting, DOC's young founders' rallying cry was, "Let's call it like it is. Let's say who's really trying to educate our patients. We ourselves must first and foremost be advocates of the patient so let's begin by educating them about the major killers."

They decided, there and then, that doctors ought to care; that doctors are in the best position to strike a blow for health and promote good health habits among patients.

Thus, DOC (Doctors Ought To Care) was born, and under Blum's leadership, began in no uncertain manner to demonstrate to the public and the media that "doctors do indeed care."



DOC's good health messages are found on park benches, such as this one, at bus stops, theaters and any location within the public eye.

The organization selected as targets of its campaign what it considered to be the three major killer habits: immoderate cigarette smoking, immoderate alcohol consumption and poor nutrition.

DOC made its first goal of impact smoking and misleading cigarette advertising. Dr. Blum is quick to point out that "We of DOC are not prohibitionists, seeking to ban either smoking or its promotion, but we believe the public is entitled to the truth about smoking and that closer scrutiny of ads making fallacious claims is needed."

For example, Blum said, "Implications by the tobacco industry that a low-tar, low-nicotine filter cigarette is safer are simply untrue. This is a myth," he asserted, "since those who switch to these newer, so-called lighter brands are likely to smoke more." Further, he claims that tobacco companies have never been made to reveal the content or nature of the chemical additives used in the manufacture of these brands."

A major thrust of this seg-

ment of DOC's campaign is to "Discourage the new generation from taking up smoking at all." And the zealous doctors have taken this message into the high schools and other youth-oriented forums on every conceivable opportunity.

Practicing physicians in Miami are being urged to ban magazines containing cigarette ads from their waiting rooms. In their stead, DOC offers eye-catching patient education materials, designed in novel fashion for impact and carrying good health messages to the patients. (Dr. Blum notes DOC has received strong support and cooperation from both his fellow physicians and medical societies in this endeavor.)

No stone within its reach is left unturned by DOC in its war on cigarette promotions. No avenue, park bench, bus stop, theater, tennis tournament or any public gathering that facilitates a forum is overlooked.

It is not surprising that members of DOC are often dubbed off-beat and radical in their approaches. Certainly the young avant-gardists have

### Patient Education Series #2

employed offbeat tactics. But these tactics have served DOC well, bringing it extensive coverage in the media and prime time on local television.

Providing a "field-day" for the media on one occasion, members of DOC made a house call on the *Miami Herald* building to call attention to the number of advertisements for cigarettes the newspaper carries.

Of this, Blum said, "Counting all of the ads, all of the editions and the number of papers sold, the *Miami Herald* distributes 30-million cigarette ads every month."

In what might be likened to a David and Goliath contest, Dr. Blum took on the mighty moguls of the tobacco industry. Tobacco officials were nonplused by the impact of his truths.

He and his health patriots  
(continued on next page)

## Doctors Protest Cigaret Ad in Herald

About 40 doctors and medical students gathered outside the Miami Herald building Wednesday to protest the cigarette advertising carried by the newspaper which they claim is false and misleading. The members of DOC (Doctors Ought to Care) demanded that the Herald: make a study of the costs of cigarette smoking to Dade taxpayers and of the chemical additives in cigarettes; publish a regular health supplement staffed comparably to the

paper's television section; and make space on the paper's opinion page available to local contributors, including members of the health professions. DOC leader Dr. Alan Blum said the group is not seeking a ban on cigarette advertising, but closer scrutiny of ads which DOC members believe to be misleading. Blum said that among the misleading advertisements are those which promise that low tar and nicotine brands are safer.



Members of DOC (Doctors Ought To Care) set up a "good health line" outside *The Miami Herald* to draw attention to cigarette advertising carried by the newspaper which they claim carries misleading promotions that ought to be re-examined.

have demonstrated against the Phillip Morris-sponsored Benson & Hedges film festival outside a Miami theater and have also parodied the Virginia Slims tennis tournament in Miami. Carrying signs emblazoned with health messages, Blum and his followers handed out leaflets slamming misleading cigarette advertising and describing the hazards of usage.

DOC is vehemently opposed to the tobacco industry's other youth-oriented promotions such as the Kool Jazz Festival, Benson & Hedges Film Festival, Virginia Slims Tennis Circuit, Kent Golden Lights Ladies Golf Classic and Cam's Motocross.

Dr. Blum said, "The tobacco ads have gone essentially unchecked in their efforts to promote smoking. Let anyone suggest a connection between moderate cigarette smoking and high health costs and he or she is branded a prohibitionist." If Dr. Blum had his way, tobacco manufacturers would

be euphemized "antihealth touters," and he said as much during a television interview in Miami on NBC's Channel 7 following DOC's picketing of the *Miami Herald* building.

"They're going to have to re-examine the kinds of claims that are made for cigarettes and identify the chemical ingredients of these things. We must begin to educate the people, not only about lung cancer, but about emphysema, coronary heart disease, facial wrinkling, bladder cancer and all the other diseases that are implicated in cigarette smoking."

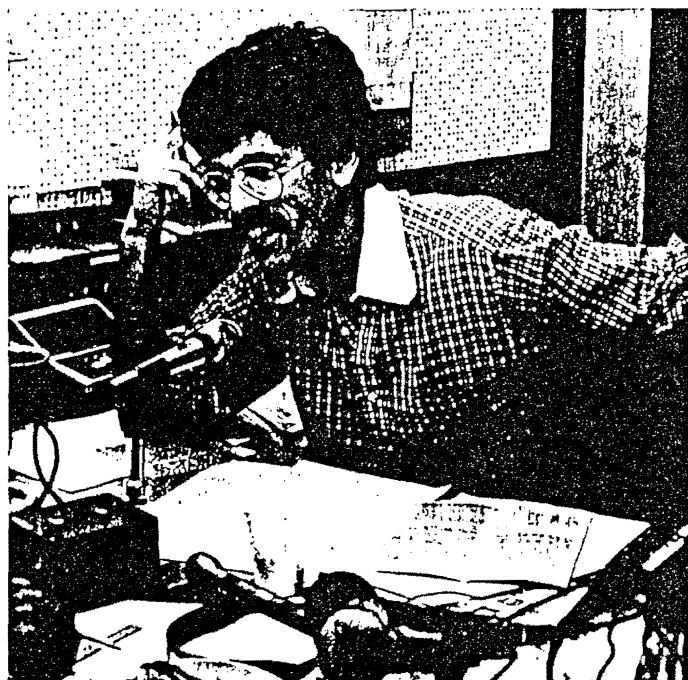
One might ask, "How effective is DOC as a patient education tool?" If feedback is any criterion, then DOC has made a resounding impact — on patients, other physicians, medical organizations and health agencies.

Dr. Blum says patients are very receptive. They appreciate being enlightened and have said so. Most are impressed by the "caring" theme

of DOC and are responding to its advocacy for healthful habits.

DOC's imaginative ap-

proaches have brought plaudits from the Congress of the United States, from the Cen- (continued on page 8)



Dr. Blum broadcasts DOC's health message on his radio program, "Doctor Show," believed to be the only prime time, commercially sponsored medical call-in and interview program in the country. DOC's theme: "You've Coughed Up Long Enough Baby."

# 'DOC'

(continued from page 7)

ter for Disease Control, from the Department of HEW, from numerous chapters of the American Cancer Society, Heart and Lung Associations, AAFP chapters, medical societies and hundreds of physicians and medical students.

Interest in DOC's campaign runs high and now that it is a chartered, nonprofit organization, efforts are under way in other states to form local DOC chapters. Its next thrust will be in the arenas of alcoholism and obesity.

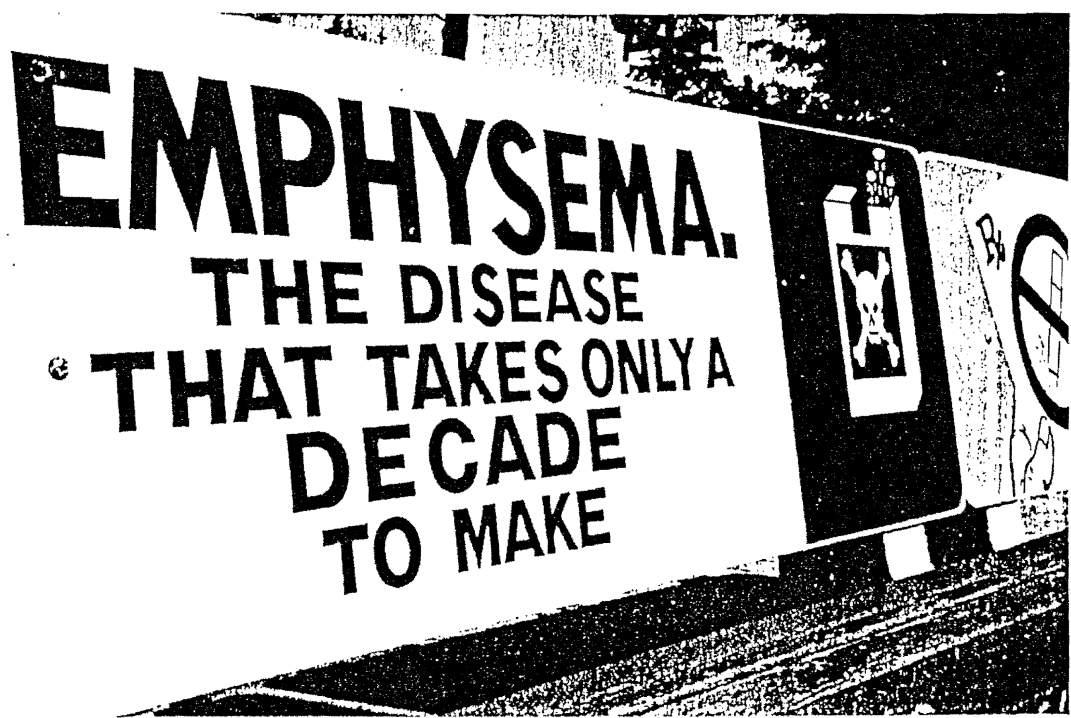
The South Carolina Family Practice Residents Association (SCFPRA) has launched a second chapter of DOC under the leadership of Dr. Rick Richards, a third-year resident in the Department of Family Practice at Spartanburg General Hospital. (Dr. Richards will serve as resident delegate to the 1979 Congress of Delegates.)

The Spartanburg-based organization of DOC employs a slightly different approach to the patient education drive. Its linchpin is a speakers bureau consisting of a cadre of speakers coordinated by five SCFPRA members. Its outreach extends statewide.

Any high school, college, civic group or Junior Chamber of Commerce looking for a speaker can contact the local resident representative who will in turn assign the group an appropriate speaker for the occasion planned.

The topic themes encompass the morbidity and mortality associated with preventable diseases. The prime targets of South Carolina's DOC organization are smoking, alcohol and drug abuse, nutrition, teenage pregnancy, venereal disease, personal hygiene and immunization.

The ultimate goal of this DOC movement is to have its protocol used in plans for



This is DOC's response to the cigarette ad, "Decade, the taste that took ten years to make." The message is appended to a bus-stop bench.

mounting a full-scale national program on patient education.

Meanwhile, Dr. Blum at the Miami-based DOC campaign headquarters urges his colleagues in the Academy to follow suit in patient education efforts. "I think DOC is

light years ahead of other organizations in understanding how to motivate people toward better health habits. More than 300 health professionals from around the country have recognized this and all we need now is some

good support from a benefactor — a foundation or two, the AMA and especially the AAFP. I think it would be more meaningful and cost effective for patient education materials to be designed by family physicians themselves," he added.



Dr. Blum and other young physicians gather to plan strategy in their patient education activities.