



PO Box 918
Goshen, IN 46527-0918
Phone: 1-888-406-3643
Email: info@mennohealth.org
Web: www.mennohealth.org

To: Members and prospective members of Menonite Healthcare Fellowship (MHF)
From: Paul D. Leichty, MHF Executive Director
Date: March 5, 2015
Subject: Healthcare events related to Menonite World Conference Assembly

Menonite Healthcare Fellowship (MHF) has been planning its Annual Gathering 2015, July 19-21, 2015, in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, immediately prior to the Menonite World Conference (MWC) Assembly, Pennsylvania 2015. It has come to the attention of MHF leaders that some people are confused about this MHF-sponsored event for two main reasons:

1. Persons who experienced past MWC Assemblies in Zimbabwe and Paraguay have been expecting activities for healthcare professionals within the MWC Assembly itself.
2. Some people have been informed of and invited to another healthcare related meeting that is being held July 20-21 in Harrisburg.

MHF planned its Annual Gathering after consulting with MWC about health-related events associated with the MWC Assembly. MHF was informed that Menonite Health Services (MHS) was planning an event prior to Assembly and eventually learned that this "Global Health Care Leaders Summit" was an invitational conference of **administrators and board members of healthcare-related institutions**. The "Summit" is sponsored by MWC with the specific goal of formulating "a recommendation to Menonite World Conference General Council and Mission Commission on establishing a global network of Anabaptist health care organizations."

The MHF Annual Gathering is focused on **individual healthcare practitioners** and open to any Menonite-related person involved in any healthcare field. Based on the information received from MWC and MHS, MHF felt certain that the conflict would be minimal for only a handful of persons.

Some MHF members have indicated that they checked a box indicating interest in healthcare when they registered for the MWC Assembly and were expecting to receive information about events within MWC Assembly similar what happened in Zimbabwe and Paraguay. Instead, they received invitations to the MWC/MHS Summit.

On February 26, 2015, leaders of MWC, MHS, and MHF met to clarify the situation. MWC and MHS leadership revealed that the invitation pool for the MWC-sponsored Summit has been extended to include **individual** healthcare professionals in order to ensure participation from continents and countries in which Menonite-related healthcare **organizations** no longer exist. This broader definition of who is invited to the MWC/MHS Summit along with the dual roles of administrator and practitioner of some MHF members means that there will be a conflict for some persons on which event to attend.

At the same time, all present at the meeting agreed that the target audience for both the MWC/MHS Summit and the MHF Annual Gathering remains as stated on the [MWC website](#). The MWC/MHS Summit is "for leaders and board members of ... organizations that are affiliated

with Mennonite World Conference member churches.” The MHF Annual Gathering is “Open to all healthcare workers...”

There is still some uncertainty about whether there will be healthcare-related workshops or meetings at the MWC Assembly. This should be clearer in April when MWC publishes its list of 200 workshops included in the MWC Assembly.

MWC leaders indicated that MHF and/or another entity are welcome to try to organize an informal gathering of healthcare workers during a mealtime at MWC Assembly. Mealtimes are the only times when space is available for meetings not already planned. The MHF Harrisburg 2015 Coordinating Committee and the MHF Board are considering this idea and will share information as it becomes available.

In follow-up conversations with MHS leadership, there is the recognition there are some similar impulses toward international relationships among a number of different Mennonite entities involved in healthcare. While the details are still being worked out, the following steps are being explored:

- MHF is invited to send a small delegation to the two specific sessions of the MWC/MHS Summit at which the proposal for a global Anabaptist health care network will be discussed. The MHF Board will appoint this delegation.
- A follow-up meeting of representatives of the MWC/MHS Summit, MHF, and possibly other entities is proposed for Tuesday evening, July 21, in Harrisburg.
- A method for participants in the MWC/MHS Summit to interact with the MHF Annual Gathering participants is being proposed for Monday morning, July 20.

In summary:

- All healthcare workers are warmly welcomed to attend the MHF [Annual Gathering 2015](#), July 19-21, 2015, at the Sheraton Harrisburg Hershey Hotel in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.
- Healthcare professionals who are also (a) administrators or board members of healthcare institutions of MWC-affiliated churches or (b) are from countries that have few if any such institutions may receive an invitation to the MWC/MHS Summit and need to choose. (It is possible, however, to attend the MHF Annual Gathering on Sunday evening through Monday noon and still get in on the beginning of the MWC/MHS Summit at 1:00 p.m. Monday.)
- MHF will continue to inform healthcare professionals on further details about the MHF Annual Gathering as well as developments of interest to healthcare workers within the MWC Assembly.

Thank you for your support of Mennonite Healthcare Fellowship. We look forward to seeing many of you in Harrisburg!

cc: Rick Stiffney, President and CEO, Mennonite Health Services
Ronald Yoder, Director of International Relations, Mennonite Health Services
Liesa Unger, Chief International Events Officer, Mennonite World Conference
Howard Good, National Coordinator for Pennsylvania 2015