



Press Release

Geneva – July 1, 2009

Humanitarian Medicine Professorship Announced at University of Geneva

Edmond J. Safra Chair Is First Step in Creation of International Institute of Humanitarian Medicine.

The University of Geneva announced the Edmond J. Safra Chair in Humanitarian Medicine, the first stage of the creation of an innovative International Institute of Humanitarian Medicine. It is believed to be the first such professorship in Europe.

The Chair, made possible by a long-term grant from the Edmond J. Safra Foundation, aims to address the pressing medical needs of the developing world in general and, in particular, of individuals found increasingly in situations of distress caused by civil disturbance, political conflict, and natural disaster.

The initiative is part of this year's commemoration of the 450th anniversary of the University of Geneva (UNIGE) and serves as a reminder of the humanistic values and the international vocation of the University.

The Edmond J. Safra Chair in Humanitarian Medicine will promote the training of medical professionals and the quality of care in developing countries. It will address the healthcare challenges in these countries by training local specialists at the University of Geneva and providing clinical care in highly-specialized areas such as paediatrics, plastic surgery, and radiology.

The Edmond J. Safra Chair is the first step towards the creation of an international Institute of Humanitarian Medicine at the University of Geneva. Its establishment follows in the philanthropic tradition begun by Edmond J. Safra, a leading banker who gave the Foundation its name. *"I am delighted with this latest example of the long-term support given by the Edmond J. Safra Foundation to the University of Geneva's Faculty of Medicine. The creation of the Edmond J. Safra Chair of Humanitarian Medicine will complement the international missions of the University,"* said Lily Safra, President of the Edmond J. Safra Foundation.



"This Chair, which will soon become a University Institute in its own right, represents a new hope for families who need medical assistance throughout the world. There is no more appropriate home for it than the University and the City of Geneva, which have dedicated themselves to humanitarian assistance throughout their history. It is an honour to help celebrate the University's 450th anniversary by continuing this tradition."

Humanitarian medicine has long been considered synonymous with care for disadvantaged people in countries stricken by war or poverty. However, over recent decades, the field has considerably expanded to cover all clinical situations characterized by a lack of access to basic care for a considerable portion of the population or a risk of violation of individual rights, whether in the context of ethnic conflict, humanitarian assistance, refugees or asylum seekers.

In terms of training, the Edmond J. Safra Chair will ensure the implementation of new modules of undergraduate and postgraduate education in emergency medicine, humanitarian medical issues related to international health and human rights, in tropical and epidemiological medicine, and in healthcare in prisons.

A first in Europe

The development of humanitarian medical issues is notably linked to the alarming increase in violations of individual rights and the increasing number of actors involved in medical and bioethics. Given the scale of these new requirements and the complexity of the underlying challenges, the University of Geneva is creating the Edmond J. Safra Chair of Humanitarian Medicine, a unique post in Switzerland, whose future nominee will be responsible for promoting training and quality of care in developing countries.

Towards an Institute of Humanitarian Medicine

Finally, under the responsibility of the professor to be nominated, the Edmond J. Safra Chair of Humanitarian Medicine will be the first building block of an Institute which will encompass all humanitarian medical issues at the Faculty of Medicine. This structure will bring together the research of Professor Philippe Chastonay on public health in the developing world and on epidemics such as cholera, the work of Professor Louis Loutanis on the identification and treatment of tropical diseases and neglected diseases, as well as the work of Professor Bernice Elger dealing with the application of humanitarian law and the quality of care for persons in detention.



The Edmond J. Safra Philanthropic Foundation

Edmond J. Safra, one of the 20th century's most accomplished bankers and a devoted philanthropist, established a major philanthropic foundation to ensure that needy individuals and organizations would continue to receive his assistance and encouragement for many years to come. The Edmond J. Safra Philanthropic Foundation, chaired by his wife Lily, draws continuing inspiration from its founder's life and values.

The Foundation supports organizations in Geneva (one of Mr. Safra's favourite cities) and around the world in four program areas: Education; Science and Medicine; Religion; and Humanitarian Assistance, Culture, and Social Welfare. In addition to the Cantonal Hospital and the University of Geneva, the Foundation has provided generous assistance to the Grand Théâtre de Genève, Beth Yaacov Synagogue (dedicated by Mr. Safra in memory of his father), Children Action, the Girsas School, the Swiss Cardiology Foundation, the International Committee of the Red Cross, and the Geneva Modern Art Museum (Mamco), among many other such organizations in the Canton of Geneva.

For further information on the Edmond J. Safra Foundation, please visit:

<http://www.edmondjsafra.org/>

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