

RURAL DOCTOR OF THE YEAR 2004

Dr Hermann Reuter

During its annual conference held at the Thohoyandou Nursing College in Limpopo Province from 24 to 25th September, the Rural Doctors' Association of Southern Africa (RuDASA) awarded the prestigious Pierre Jaques Rural Doctor of the Year prize to Dr. Herman Reuter, from Lusikisiki, in the Eastern Cape.

Dr. Reuter was nominated by the Treatment Action Campaign (TAC) with motivation for this nomination being received from patients and nursing staff of the Lusikisiki Wellness clinic. He has put tireless effort into the running of the wellness clinic, which enables provision of antiretroviral treatment in one of the remotest areas in the country. This is achieved against all the odds associated with poverty in the community, poor infrastructure and lack of adequate staffing. He has also educated the community and staff on the critical issues pertaining to care of those infected with HIV.

Dr Herman Reuter is currently the medical practitioner for all primary health care clinics in Lusikisiki, and is a project coordinator of the HIV programme in Lusikisiki. Lusikisiki is in the Eastern Cape, arguably South Africa's least developed province, and is one of the poorest rural towns in South Africa. Dr Reuter is charged with forming close ties with its community's clinics, working to help address problems such as medicine shortages or poor staff training and ensuring proper community involvement on clinic boards and the health district committee

He is also responsible for developing and implementing HIV treatment and prevention programmes, community awareness, Voluntary Counseling and Testing, PMTCT, training of nurses, management of patients with AIDS, preparation for the HAART programme which started in October 2003, etc.

He has run workshops on HIV medication, government institutions and parliament, mass mobilization, giving political leadership and administrative management.

RuDASA evaluated Dr. Reuter as a rural doctor at the coalface of the realities of rural areas who has served the community relentlessly. He was unable to attend the conference due to severe staff shortage at his workplace. Ms Noyise Kweza from MSF received the award in recognition of this contribution on his behalf.

The Award is co-sponsored by RuDASA, the South African Academy of Family Practice/Primary Care, and the South African Medical Association. It is also supported Heinemann Publishers, which donated a set of the Primary Clinical Care Manuals.

RuDASA would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge Dr. Reuter's contribution in addressing the challenges of rural practice and wish him and his colleagues all the best in serving the rural community.



Ms Noyise Kweza, MSF, receiving the Pierre Jaques Award on behalf of Dr Hermann Reuter, from outgoing RuDASA chairperson, Dr Elma de Vries.