

Rural Doctor of the Year award 2014: Dr Jenny Nash



The Pierre Jacques Rural Doctor of the Year award was presented to Dr. Jenny Nash at the 18th Rural Health conference that was held in Worcester, 21-24 September 2014.

Being a doctor at a PHC clinic has never been considered glamorous work in the medical fraternity and yet here is where the foundation of health care begins. Jenny Nash recognises this and tries to find a solution to each patient complaint be it a sore throat, a high viral load in a patient on ARVs, MDR-TB or problems falling pregnant. Even when her clinics are overflowing and she is dealing with challenges of drug or staff shortages she will dedicate all her energy to every single patient she see. But Jenny does not only do what is expected of her. She is always willing to go beyond the call of duty to improve health care at her own and other facilities. One of her great passions is educating and enabling her nurse colleagues and she teaches nurses at a large CHC

over and above her normal duties. Although busy, Jenny stays up to date with her clinical knowledge and skill through an in-credible interest in doing what is best for her patient. She attends courses, reads and discusses cases with consultants whenever possible - making her a highly capable clinician.

One of her many remarkable qualities, is her ongoing enthusiasm and fortitude in the face of continued challenges. One of her clinics has been chronically short staffed for the last two years with one disaster following another. Jenny would fill in the gaps by helping out nurses, collecting and dispensing medication, putting up drips and making numerous phone calls to managers and NGOs to see if any relief was possible. Although frustrated and exhausted at times, she will never raise her voice in anger or judge health professionals working under difficult circumstances; most importantly she will not take out her frustration on her patients.

She has been an active member and advocate as part of the Rural Doctors Association of South Africa. Advocacy is not always easy and yet Jenny would never hesitate to speak out for better care for her patients. She also participates in the East Cape Health Crisis Action Coalition.

Her nomination read as follows: "We wish to nominate Jenny not only for what she does, but specifically for THE WAY in which she does it. Her approach encapsulates what primary health care should be, even under impossible conditions. She is a beacon of hope and brings what is noble and honorable to the medical profession."