

Health Journalism Conference Draws World-Class Speakers

Thursday 8 May, 2014

First Do No Harm, an international conference on health journalism and PR to be held in Coventry next week (14-16 May), will draw some of the world's top speakers on journalism and PR in health to address an audience travelling from all over Europe.

Speakers include Roy Lilley, one of the UK's top health bloggers; Iain Chalmers, Coordinator of the James Lind Initiative which brings patients and doctors together to guide medical research; Shaun Lintern, the reporter who helped break the Mid Staffs NHS scandal and who gave evidence to the Francis Inquiry on standards in the NHS; and John Lister, veteran health campaigner and researcher, and Information Director of London Health Emergency.

Speakers from outside the UK include Dr Ivan Oransky, vice president of the Association of Healthcare Journalists; Andre Picard, health columnist at Canada's Globe and Mail (Canada's leading national daily); and Harry Dugmore, Director of the Discovery Centre for Health Journalism at Rhodes University, South Africa. Other speakers are coming from the Netherlands, Canada, USA, Italy and India.

Conference organiser Alan Taman (himself a speaker at the conference, on health PR) said:

'The calibre of international speakers we are attracting matches the importance of the subject. Health is a massive area and health journalism and PR can affect everybody in a direct way that other areas of journalism and PR might not. But there are pressures acting on health journalism which mean the specialists have less time to check their material and more generalists are being "given" health with little or no training or support. At the same time, health PRs are under more pressure to act unethically and similarly have little or no support, even in the NHS. Our research has shown that.

'Add to that the equally powerful and remorseless pressures acting on healthcare to cut services and you have what could be a "perfect storm" for healthcare, health journalism, and health PR. It's no exaggeration to say lives could be at stake. What no one can say is how many.

'By drawing world-class speakers to the conference, we are aiming to draw up plans to ensure all journalists and PRs who work in health are given sufficient training and support. This is only the beginning.'

The conference also offers a special day rate so that busy working journalists who could not spare 3 days can still benefit from hearing the bulk of the speakers on one day (Thursday 15 May). See booking website for details:

www.europeanhealthjournalism.com

Ends

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