

The scene is set and physical therapy's big event is taking shape



It's just under a year away, but preparation for physical therapy's biggest worldwide event has been quietly underway for years. Members of the WCPT Secretariat are already living and breathing World Physical Therapy 2011. Here they talk about the work that's been going on, and what's already making the event special to them.

If a Congress is reflected by enthusiasm about its location, then WCPT's Congress next year is already a guaranteed success. "Amsterdam is a very special place," says WCPT Secretary General Brenda Myers. She, along with Professional Policy Consultant Tracy Bury and WCPT Executive Committee members have been publicising the Congress at member organisation meetings around the world.

"I think people are really becoming engaged by the idea that a world Congress could be very important to them," says Tracy Bury. "What appeals to people, time and time again, is that this provides the opportunity for international exchange with peers – in a far more interactive way than could ever be achieved through new technology. People are also talking about Amsterdam as a destination. It's such a beautiful city, and so fabulously placed to explore the rest of Europe."

The main programme of the Congress will be held at the Amsterdam RAI conference centre, in Southern Amsterdam, one of the busiest exhibition and conference centres in the world. The main auditorium can accommodate over 1750 people.

The key to organising the Congress programme has been trying to stay close to the here and now of what physical therapists do, and what they want to achieve. So Tracy Bury has been consulting widely with physical therapists across the world, and working closely with the International Scientific

Committee to put together the Congress programme.

“We’ve really tried to respond to feedback from past delegates, and put our finger on what it is that will appeal to future delegates,” she says. “We hope we’re managing to show people how much they can benefit – and enjoy it – if they come not once, but to successive Congresses.”

The WCPT Secretariat is working closely with the Netherlands physical therapy association, the KNGF, to bring the Congress to fruition. “Our host organisation is key to the success of the Congress and it’s been great working with the KNGF,” says Brenda Myers. “In recent years WCPT has been increasing its role in the organisation of the Congress. The idea is that we build internal expertise and rely less on external people like conference organisers. In this way, we can build continuity, learn with each Congress, and capitalise on the knowledge we build. We’re hoping that this expertise won’t just help with the organisation of Congress, but with other events as well, for example those being held by regions and subgroups.”

One of the functions that has been newly brought in-house is sponsorship, exhibitions and advertising, which is being coordinated by the Secretariat’s newest member Stuart Attwood.

“We have a lot of interest in exhibiting and sponsorship from companies all over the world, from Australia to Brazil, from Canada to Russia,” he says. “It’s interesting that many companies want to design their own space, rather than using the standard exhibition shell, at the exhibition. This should mean that there is great variety for delegates. There’s no doubt there’ll be the opportunity to see some of the most advanced, up-to-the minute technologies in physical therapy.”