



## **Medicines for Body, Love for People: Freirean Lessons for those Who Dare Teach Health Care Professionals**

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### **Abstract**

It is impossible to talk about professionalism in healthcare without including issues of social justice. Nevertheless, just a glance at diseases like tuberculosis or HIV/AIDS shows how health care professions struggle to recognize the relationship between social inequalities and health. Unfortunately, health care professionals do not incorporate social issues as central to their practices. So, it is evident that changes need to be made and professional education in health care might be a way to start crafting this transformation. Paulo Freire's philosophy of "education for critical consciousness" takes on special relevance within this context. We strongly believe that the health care system is twisted with an oppressive, often "invisible" structure of power. Health care "reform" cannot reasonably be envisioned except within the context of broader structural transformations. For this purpose, Freirean pedagogical approach might be a wise way to engage health care professionals in a critical analysis of the political structures that shape the world. This dialogical approach to change, stressing action based on critical reflection by the people, can be a significant way to supplement current efforts to deal with the "health care crisis" in many developing countries. The Freirean perspective won't be taken as an antidote to the current health care crisis. Rather, this paper is an attempt to shed light on important – yet still subjugated – issues related to the 'rootedness' of all health care professions in the reality of an ill world. It is an attempt to help professionals to understand the broader world and to recognize their membership in it. We need to prepare health care professionals to serve as change agents through dialogue, reflection and action, and a willingness to understand the difficulty of others. This dialogue needs to begin in educational media spheres, conferences, classrooms, and outside the walls that separate health professionals from patients.