This year we celebrate the 70th anniversary of the NHS, one of this country’s proudest achievements. In my time as President of the RMBF I have encountered so many people who are deeply passionate about their work in the NHS. This includes our trustees and volunteers, many of whom have spent their whole career working for the service; our beneficiaries in recovery, determined to resume their work as NHS doctors; and of course today’s medical students, striving to play their part in a system that has such a tremendous impact on the lives of patients.

As with all major milestones, this anniversary has also prompted substantial reflection on the changing nature of the health service, and the medical profession as a whole. Medicine has always been a fulfilling profession, but never an easy one. Sir Cyril Chantler observed nearly 20 years ago that “medicine used to be simple, ineffective and relatively safe. Now it is complex, effective but potentially dangerous”. How very true this remains today, with new technologies, complex new therapies and increasing comorbidity.

Doctors at all levels are experiencing increased pressure, with many of the support structures that we used to rely on having fallen by the wayside. We must learn an enormous amount of complex medical knowledge, and work in an environment of frequent upheaval with little to no constancy. While I have faith in our ability to adapt and change as a profession, it is always a great relief to know that the RMBF is there for those who need compassionate support. Indeed, the RMBF is one of the few constants on which we can rely, delivering the same help to doctors and their loved ones today that it did over 180 years ago.

One way in which we are looking to make our support even more fit for the future is in developing the RMBF volunteer network. Our Medical Liaison Officer team now includes Student MLOs, who are doing fantastic work to spread the word of our support in medical schools. Our Coaching & Mentoring programme is also progressing at pace, with the first cohort of volunteer coaches being trained to provide high quality support to beneficiaries looking to get back to work. It is inspiring to know that we helped 30 beneficiaries to return to or remain in work as doctors last year, and just as inspiring to see the energy with which the RMBF and our volunteers are working on practical solutions – ones that will support even more beneficiaries to go on and do the same in future.

Making good early interventions, before crisis deepens, is one of the most effective ways to help doctors stay in work. DocHealth, our joint psychotherapeutic consultation service with the BMA, is able to do just that. The service, which supports doctors facing burnout, depression, anxiety and many other difficulties, has made great progress in its first two years, helping over 330 doctors to date. I am very pleased we will be able to continue supporting its operation.

I would also urge you to look out for our next awareness campaign later this year, which will focus on our rapidly growing programme of support for medical students. Our previous campaigns, What’s Up Doc? and Together for Doctors, both attracted significant media attention, and resulted in more doctors in need reaching out to us. There will be many opportunities for our supporters to contribute and spread the word of the campaign, so I hope you’ll join in and help make it another big success.

All of the strides we make to support the work of the RMBF are vital to lifting doctors and medical students out of serious difficulty, and a broad base of support is critical to help us continue and strengthen our work in future. The NHS 70th anniversary is a great occasion on which to look back, reminisce and celebrate, but we must also look forward to the next 70 years and the needs of future generations of doctors.

My thanks as ever to all our hard-working volunteers and the staff team in Wimbledon, and of course to you, our supporters, for your continued dedication and generosity.

Professor Dame Parveen Kumar DBE
President
Royal Medical Benevolent Fund
Dr Rajiv Raju, a staff-grade psychiatrist, was living in a remote town in Scotland with his wife and their young child of 15 months when an aortic dissection and gastrointestinal ischaemia almost cost him his life.

I was sitting with my secretary planning clinics when I collapsed. My aorta had split and a small tear causing intense pain became a full dissection in under 24 hours.

Once it was established that I wasn’t having a heart attack, the surgeons started operating to keep me alive while my organs were dying. I lost my stomach, gall bladder, half of my pancreas and part of my intestine. Both of my kidneys were infarcted and I had a brain haemorrhage. What began as a 4-hour surgery to repair my aorta ended up being an 12-hour surgery to save my pancreas and safely shut me down.

When I woke up from an induced coma five weeks later I had about twelve drains coming out of my body to catch fluid. I couldn’t eat food for nine months and was reliant on total parenteral nutrition.

The most difficult part was becoming a patient when I had been so used to looking after others and providing for my family. My sister and sister-in-law had flown from India to help my wife take care of the little one, and one of our friends kindly gave up his home when I had to be moved to a hospital about 100 miles away so they could be close. But we were beginning to struggle financially.

A few months before my second operation to join my gullet to what remained of my intestine, pancreas, liver ducts and gut, my sick pay was reduced by half. It was at that point that a retired GP friend urged me to contact the RMBF knowing that it would be difficult for us to survive on my half pay alone. After a lot of nagging from my wife, I made the call and spoke to a Caseworker who was caring, helpful and efficient. From there the RMBF helped us to cover living costs which made all the difference to me and my family.

Being a doctor or being a professional, you want to be very independent and you feel ashamed to ask anybody for a handout. The RMBF made it clear that it wasn’t just my family that would benefit from me getting back to work but future patients too. So, I never got that feeling of guilt with them; instead it was like they had become part of our lives. Over Christmas they even sent a little extra money so we could buy a present for my son.

As a doctor, you see plenty of other people having a bad time and you also see those that fight back and get things on track.

That’s what I wanted to do, and that’s something the RMBF helped with. Once I started eating and regaining my faculties, I returned to clinics remarkably quickly. I had to use a magnifying glass at first as I couldn’t see very well, but I was amazed to simply be back with patients and enjoying banter with colleagues. I also made the decision to apply as a Trainee Consultant at the age of 44 which I’m so glad I did.

At a time when we most needed support the RMBF were there for me and my family, and I had the sense that if we fell into further difficulty I could call and I would be heard.

Speaking from the heart, I will always have the greatest respect for the RMBF.

Our sincerest thanks to Dr Raju for sharing his story
Increasing our impact
2017-18 in numbers

255
beneficiaries supported this year

£690,954
total financial impact on our beneficiaries

30
beneficiaries helped to return to work or remain in work

31
beneficiaries given help towards education or training

70% of new applicants for our help were under the age of 40

53% of applicants turned to us with mental health issues

36% of our beneficiaries work as GPs or GP trainees

DocHealth

335 doctors have now self-referred to service

84% with high/very high risk of burnout
51% with significant depression
85% with significant anxiety

Finances
Year ended 31st March 2018

Sources of income
Donations £312,392
Sponsorship £41,000
Legacies £761,408
Trading £19,831
Investment income £598,616
Total £1,733,247

Expenditure
Charitable activities £1,260,446
Generating future income £370,931
Trading £5,386
Total £1,636,763
About the RMBF
Governance & contact information

**Patron**
Her Majesty The Queen

**President**
Professor Dame Parveen Kumar DBE

**Trustees**
Chair of the Board of Trustees
Professor Michael Farthing

Vice Chair
Miss Heather Mellows OBE

Treasurer
Professor Amritpal Hungin OBE DL

Chair of Grants and Awards Committee
Mrs Christine Linehan

Members of the Board of Trustees
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Dr Oliver Seyfried
Dr Richard Stevens

**Chief Executive**
Mr Steve Crone

**Auditors**
Knox Cropper, Chartered Accountants
8/9 Well Court, London, EC4M 9DN

**Investment managers**
Newton Investment Management Ltd
160 Queen Victoria Street, London, EC4V 4LA

Ruffer LLP
80 Victoria Street, London, SW1E 5JL

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**Get help**
If you’re a doctor or medical student facing hardship, please get in touch. All enquiries are confidential. Talk to our Casework team:

020 8540 9194 (option 1)
help@rmbf.org

**Get involved**
There are many ways you can help the RMBF to support doctors and medical students in hardship. Please get in touch:

020 8540 9194 (option 2)
www.rmbf.org/get-involved
info@rmbf.org

**Get social**
If you use social media, liking and sharing our posts really helps us reach more doctors and medical students, so that the whole medical profession knows where to turn when times become tough.

twitter.com/TheRMBF
facebook.com/TheRMBF
youtube.com/DoctorsCharity
tiny.cc/linkedinRMBF
Donation form

Your details
Title __________________ Forename(s) __________________
Surname __________________
Home address __________________
Postcode __________________
Email __________________
Phone __________________

I would like to make a one-off donation
£25 £50
£100 £
Other
I enclose a cheque/charity voucher made payable to RMBF
I would like to make a donation by
MasterCard/Maestro/Visa/Visa Debit/Amex
Card no. __________________
Start date MMYY Expiry date MMYY
Issue no. (Maestro only) Signature Date

I would like to make a regular donation
Amount £
and monthly quarterly annually thereafter until further notice
Bank name __________________
Bank address __________________
Account name __________________
Account number __________________
Sort code __________________
Signature Date

Payment to: RMBF, NatWest Bank, Regent Street, London, sort code: 56-00-27, account number 24465178. This replaces any existing standing order

Contacting you
We will only contact you via the methods of communication you’re happy with.
If you’ve already let us know your contact preferences, you can leave this blank – or check the relevant boxes to update your preferences.
Please confirm if you are happy for us to contact you via the following channels with information about our news, activities and how you can donate and support our work (including volunteering or fundraising on our behalf).
Your details will only be used by the Royal Medical Benevolent Fund – we will never give your information to other organisations to use for marketing purposes.
For full details see www.rmbf.org/privacy-policy

I’m happy to be contacted by:
☐ Email
☐ Text
☐ Phone
☐ Post
☐ None (unsubscribe from RMBF communications)

Boost your donation by 25p of Gift Aid for every £1 you donate
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I want to Gift Aid my donation and any donations I make in the future or have made in the past 4 years to the Royal Medical Benevolent Fund.

I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that tax year it is my responsibility to pay any difference.
Please notify the charity if you want to cancel this declaration, change your name or home address, or no longer pay sufficient tax on your income and/or capital gains.
If you pay Income Tax at the higher or additional rate and want to receive the additional tax relief due to you, you must include all your Gift Aid donations on your Self-Assessment tax return or ask HM Revenue and Customs to adjust your tax code.

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or to RMBF, 24 Kings Road, Wimbledon, London SW19 8QN (stamp required)
You can also donate online at rmbf.org or by phone on 020 8540 9194

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