

DDSO clients tops with top doc

By M.K. Fottrell

Dr. Publius Martins' interest in pulmonary medicine began early. As a child in Brazil, he witnessed the ravages of tuberculosis. A nearby sanitarium provided a haunting spectacle for the young future physician.

"During the '50s and '60s TB was endemic of the area where I lived," Martins says. "I saw many people who were emaciated and near death."

To Martins, the spectacular beauty of the Brazilian countryside became a poignant reminder of the tragic suffering of those quarantined patients. His natural desire to help others became intertwined with those memories, and Martins vowed to devote himself to pulmonary medicine.

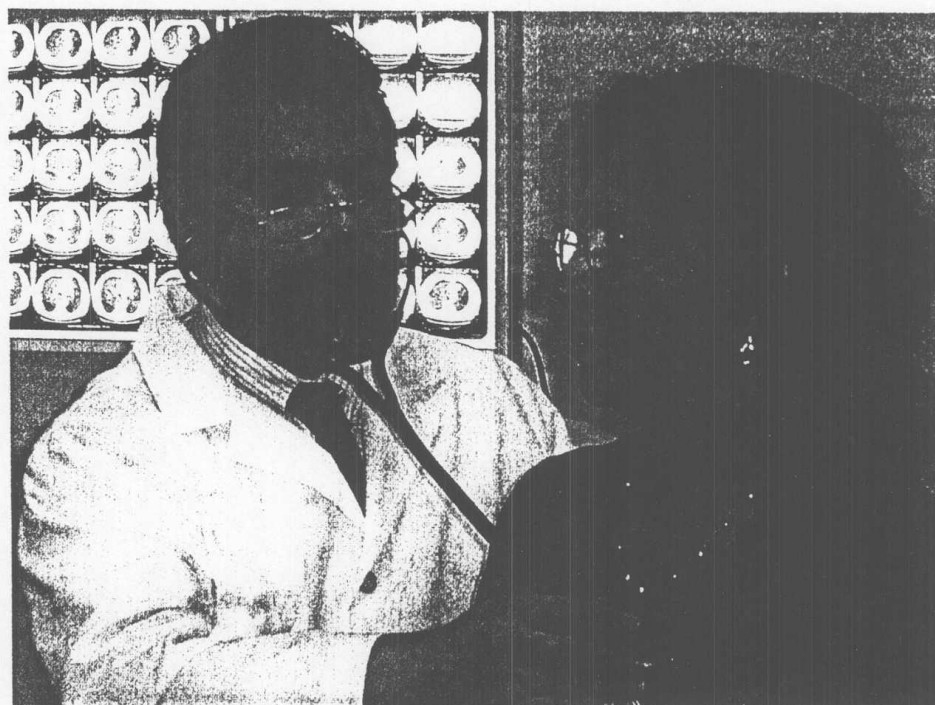
Devote himself is just what he did.

Martins was named one of the "Best Doctors in New York" in the June 5, 2000 issue of *New York Magazine*. This is no small honor. He earned a place on the list after more than 20,000 medical professionals were surveyed and asked, "to whom would you send a family member for treatment."

A PEF member since 1986, Martins works at the Staten Island Developmental Disabilities Services Office (DDSO) where he specializes in internal medicine with a subspecialty in pulmonary medicine.

Many of Martins' patients at the DDSO suffer severe curvature of the spine, which predisposes them to lung infections and a multitude of respiratory diseases.

Martins says he has found an unexpected benefit to working for



ONE OF THE BEST — PEF member Dr. Publius Martins, who was recently voted a top pulmonary specialist in New York City, listens to the lungs of a patient.

the state.

"I discovered I enjoy caring for the disabled," Martins says. "I am very moved by it. I've become very attached to the patients I've been following for 16 years. So I've never quit, even though I've become very active with other things."

In addition to his full-time state job, Martins also shares a private practice with three other physicians. And he is chief of pulmonary services for Sisters of Charity Medical Center at St.

Vincent's Campus on Staten Island.

So many professional responsibilities often make for a 15-hour workday.

But Martins has a special fondness for the work he does for the state.

"I'm very proud to be a PEF member," Martins says, "and I've been very proud of the work I do for the Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities. Regardless of whatever else I do professionally, I consider this among my most important work."

MOBILIZING

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is doing business from now on."

And PEF has plenty of business to do.

"We are going to mobilize our members' power behind political candidates who stand up for our issues," Benson says. "And we're mobilizing our members' power to lobby for those issues."

Mobilizing members to turn out quickly in support of labor-management issues is just as powerful at the local and agency level as it has been at the state level, Benson says.

"Whether we are turning out a thousand members in 24 hours to

surround the offices of the governor's director of employee relations, or sending 50 angry members into a disciplinary hearing at the state Health Department in support of steward Sheila Bradwell, or packing a crucial meeting of hospital officials at Roswell Park, we make a statement that management cannot ignore," Benson adds.

"We have two options for dealing with management. One strategy is to 'Go along, to get along.' The other is to 'Fight for what we want.' We didn't want to have to fight for our contract, but we knew the other strategy had been tried and only produced contracts that included years of zero raises," Benson says.

"We learned the hard lesson that the power of your argument will never get you

a good contract. It takes raw political power to do that. And our power comes from our members," he says.

"No amount of lawsuits or grievances or anything else can equal the power we generate when our members are mobilized around a common goal. Mobilizing is not a flash-in-the-pan or a fad. This is where PEF is going to be from now on.

"So, send us your home e-mail address, keep checking our web site and the PEF bulletin board where you work and calling our Hotline.

"PEF is on the move and we're just getting started."