



Proposed Process for the Development of Position Papers

(Original Version by Dr. Milton Lum, 1997; Revised Version by Dr. Mary Cardosa on behalf of the National Health Policy Committee, 2023; Accepted by 63rd MMA Council on 26th of May 2023)

1. The objective of the development of position papers is to reflect in writing the MMA's policies and positions on various health and healthcare issues.
2. As policies and positions are dynamic ones and not static, the position papers will be reviewed from time to time to reflect the changing health care environment. Position papers will be reviewed every 10 years, or earlier if deemed necessary.
3. The Council shall make decisions on the choice of topics, the need for revision and updating of existing position papers. In making such decisions, the views of the general membership of the MMA shall be considered by Council. However, any individual MMA member and any MMA Committee may initiate / put forward suggestions for topics for position papers.
4. Once a decision is made about a new position paper, or the need to revise an existing position paper, the Council will direct the National Health Policy Committee (NHPC) to assign the appropriate committee to prepare a draft of the position paper (for new ones) or review and revise the existing position paper.
5. It is recommended that the position paper be written following a standardised format (See appendix to this document), and will include the following:
 - (a) Title
 - (b) Abstract
 - (c) Introduction
 - (d) Problem Statement
 - (e) Position (with Recommendations)
 - (f) Conclusion
 - (g) References
6. The first review of the draft shall be made by the NHPC committee, and suggestions for changes may be sent to the author / committee responsible for writing the first draft. This first review will also make the necessary edits for typographical errors and English mistakes.
7. The NHPC will then send the proposed position paper to the Honorary General Secretary, who will do the following:
 - (a) submit the draft position paper to the Council, and
 - (b) put the position paper onto the MMA website (accessible to members only) for comments from members.
 - (c) Inform the Berita MMA Editorial board to announce that there is a new position paper open for comments on the website, and / or send an email blast to members to inform them that a draft position paper has been posted for comments / feedback from the membership.

A specific time frame will be set for the reviews to be completed (e.g., 3 months)

8. If there are no changes suggested by Council or members within the time frame given, the Hon Gen Secretary will re-table the paper at Council for final approval.
9. If changes / editing is needed, the NHPC will collate all comments and feedback (from Council and general membership) and return it to the original author / committee for review and editing (within a given time frame e.g., 3 months). The second draft of the position paper will then be returned to the NHPC for review and final editing. The NHPC will then submit the second draft of the position paper to the Council for final approval.
10. After final approval by Council, the position paper (or a summary of it) will be published in the Berita MMA and the full position paper on the MMA website (open to the public). MMA Members will also be informed about the new (or revised) position paper by email blast. The position papers that have been approved by the Council shall be reported in the Annual Report of the MMA in the year the position papers were approved.
11. If there are any actions or issues for action recommended by the position paper, the responsibility for this lies with the Council.
12. If the Council decides to withdraw any position paper, the NHPC shall be notified of the same. The HGS shall then inform the author of the withdrawn position paper of the decision of the Council.



Position Paper Format

A position paper shall be concise (fewer than 3000 words recommended) and formatted as below:

SECTIONS	DESCRIPTION
Title	The title is a succinct description of the position paper. Acronyms must be avoided.
Abstract	The abstract is a concise (fewer than 250 words) review of the paper. The abstract summarises the introduction, background, body, and major points of the paper.
Introduction	The introduction concisely states the purpose and historical background, current status and importance of the problem that prompted the creation of the paper.
Problem Statement	The problem statement gives an overview of what is currently known about a particular topic by providing a problem statement and identifying the stakeholders involved.
Position	<p>The position aims to provide a balanced review of the topic by discussing the current state of knowledge, any still-debated areas, and the best practices that are most commonly used. It should only include information accepted as fact based on existing scientific methods and knowledge with the impact of the problem being addressed. Different viewpoints will be acknowledged and discussed. This section should provide the policy recommendation(s) with rationale and plans for implementation, monitoring & evaluation. Group the proposed solutions by category and stay at a system level. Only include graphics, figures, flow charts or decision trees if necessary.</p> <p>*This section will not include personal opinions, speculative theories, or information only relevant to a specific case that is not generalisable.</p>
Conclusion	The conclusion succinctly makes a recommendation for one solution over another to solve the problem.
References	The paper must include a concise list of references that support the main points of the paper and the mainstream minority opinions discussed in the paper. Please use APA style for citation.