

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



And now,
the end is near,
and so I face the
final curtain.

Doctors,
I'll say it clear,
I'll state my case,
of which
I'm certain.

I've served
a term that's full,
with meetings,
press statements
& functions.

And more,
much more than
this, I did it
My Way.

Being the President of MMA is to focus on issues that affect the well being of doctors in Public and Private Practice, in every aspect that could contribute to Patient Safety and Quality Healthcare.

That means numerous meetings and following up on issues with the stakeholders; from the patient, doctors and medical groups/speciality associations, clinical practice setting bodies (CKAPS), insurance companies and the regulatory bodies like MMC and MOH.

Starting from my term as President a year ago, it was hectic to say the least. I was invited to give a keynote address and be a panellist at EU-ABC Malaysia Health Roadshow which was an eye-opening experience for me. A few days later, I was invited to be a speaker for MLSM Regional Medico-legal Conference 2023. Mingling with the Lawyers and Doctors on medico-legal issues (which I am passionate about) was enlightening!

It was not all work, as there were quite a number of dinners, and conferences from related industries where one can mingle, network and build a relationship for future collaborations if necessary.

I remember that in my inaugural speech, I was concerned on the well-being of doctors, especially in the public sector; involving the contract doctors whereby their working hours, environment, and training, is much to be desired! I believe in giving the best to the patients and to give quality healthcare, the doctor must be in a good state emotionally, physically and professionally, and also to be mentored by the seniors, specialists



Dr Azizan Binti Abdul Aziz
President
president@mma.org.my

and consultants in a conducive environment.

Addressing maldistribution in healthcare workers in the country is critical. This has led to burnout in doctors, and many have quit. Other contributory factors to quitting such as unclear pathways or opportunity to pursue their postgraduate and lower salary scale in the contract doctors.

I have approached the DG of Health on several occasions regarding the issue of better working hours for contract doctors and other doctors as a whole, such as the European Working Time Directive or even the Australian working hours, which takes into account of the doctor's well-being. According to the International Labour Organization, normal working hours is 8 hours per day and 48 hours per week. In Australia, it is 36-39 hours per week for doctors. However Malaysia has a different stand on this matter.

The 8-hour day may be exceeded in the case of shift work, up to 13 hours a day, and calculated to be cumulative hours per week allowed with days off.

Executive Committee Members



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Working in shifts and overlapping shift hours means a need for adequate number of doctors. That is where maldistribution of doctors at every healthcare facility must be monitored on a real time dashboard and for public viewing too.

The issues that have been raised in SCHOMOS are many, MMA has raised them with the YBMK, DG or with the Directors of the relevant departments concerned at every opportunity that arised. Last 9 July at MOF, I was representing MMA (with other stakeholders) at Budget 2025 Libat-urus; requesting from the Minister of Finance (and also the Prime Minister) an increase in on-call allowance for MOs & Specialists (the last increase was in 2013) for Budget 2025. DS Anwar Ibrahim agreed to it during the session. I also mentioned on increasing the posts of JUSA C,

that is long overdue to avoid further brain-drain.

PPS issues from the private sector are also being raised with the relevant authority, TPAs/MCOs, and clients of the TPAs. The recent change in policy regarding long term medication dispensing issues with NCD management is a serious concern. I have also appeared on Niaga Awani talk show on Managing Healthcare Shortages & Costs, whereby TPA issues were mentioned.

I am grateful to have a supportive EXCO TEAM that consisted of the Immediate Past President (Dr Muruga Raj), President Elect (Dato' Dr Kalwinder Singh Khaira), the Hon. General Secretary (Datuk Dr Arasu), Hon. Gen. Treasurer (Dr Vasu Pillai), the two Hon. Deputy Secretaries (Dr Arvind and Dr Sivanaesan), and not forgetting the competent PPS Chairman (Dato' Dr Parmjit Singh) and for the public sector or SCHOMOS which faces never-ending issues, the cool Dr Sivabala.

My heartfelt thank you to my EXCO team, MMA press officer Mr Darren Atkins and the wonderful MMA secretariat led by the COO Ms Rissa Soetama and Ms Jalina, for keeping track of the full diary of activities and appointments for the MMA President!

Last but not least, thank you to all MMA members and non-members too (please be members soon, to benefit all doctors in Malaysia) for your support in MMA.