



# President's Message

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The current month has seen MMA in the news defending the sanctity and integrity of the medical profession. What started as a twitter post of a video on corruption involving medical doctors on the issue of medical certificates by the Malaysian Anti Corruption Commission, erupted into a row on social media. It tarred all medical professionals in this country with a single brush, as if all doctors are susceptible to corruption. MMA immediately launched a protest demanding the removal of the video. It was taken down after the vociferous objection of the association which had received tremendous support as can be seen by the positive comments on social media.

The exposure of fake vaccination certificates being issued by a General Practitioner (GP) threatened to disrupt all that MMA had done to show to the public that members of the medical fraternity do preserve the integrity and ethics of the profession. The revelation of more GPs being involved in this forgery struck deep into the hearts of all doctors in Malaysia.

Have the integrity of the profession been eroded so much that some doctors had to lose sight of their dignity by indulging in such fraudulent practices that can bring harm to the health of the public whilst all of us in the healthcare fraternity are joining hands in the effort to control the COVID-19 pandemic?

Such forms of profiteering are shameful and cast the medical profession in an unfavourable light. The MMA had called on the authorities to do a thorough investigation and bring the full extent of the law down on such rogue doctors as well as those who had approached them for such fake certificates. According to news reports, it has thus far only involved clinics which have been offering paid vaccines and not the ones offering free vaccines under the COVID-19 National Immunisation Programme (NIP) as the documentation and reporting system for the NIP is rather stringent.

As a whole, the private sector involvement in the COVID-19 NIP is a huge success. As of 16

January 2022, GPs and various health NGOs had managed to give 6,866,085 booster doses, which is 73.3% of the total booster doses given nationwide. It is said to be one of the most successful Public Private Partnership program so far. A big appreciation to the GPs and NGOs who have been involved in this highly successful partnership programme.

The engagement on amendments to Act 342, Prevention and Control of Infectious Diseases Act 1988 is still ongoing and the discussions have been very thorough. We look forward to a good outcome on the review of the amendments to this Act.

Elsewhere, engagements on various issues with the Ministry of Health have been going pretty smoothly. As mentioned before, MMA's representatives sit on various boards and bodies in the Ministry of Health as well as other Ministries and health related groups.

We had an MMA Awards Presentation and Appreciation Night for the various MMA award recipients dating back two terms.

The awards are usually presented during our Annual Dinners, which haven't been held for two years. With the relaxation of the SOPs, it was decided to honour the award recipients with an awards presentation in a physical way. It was a resounding success with all attendees feeling refreshed with the chance to meet up physically after being cooped up for so long.

The Hon. Health Minister Tuan Khairy Jamaluddin attended as the chief guest. His speech was very encouraging and shows that he is committed to reforms in the healthcare of this nation, which is inline with MMA's aspirations.

Healthcare reforms may yet see the light of day as the Health Minister had also announced on the drawing up of a white paper on healthcare reforms. MMA has been pushing for this for many years and is optimistic that this time round, it may see the beginnings of a push towards reform.

The MMA Health Policy Committee held an MMA Insider Forum on Healthcare Reform on 8 January 2022 which was to be the final act before the committee completes its review of the Malaysian Healthcare system. This forum was to be a platform for the MMA high level stakeholders to add their input for consideration to be included in the recommendations to improve the healthcare system. It is our aim that with the conclusion of this forum, the report can then be published and used as a guide for policy makers. It is hopeful that we can follow it up with a forum involving a bigger reach among the medical fraternity to allow for a larger input of views and opinions which may

be useful as the Health Minister works on the white paper.

The Pahang Branch had its Annual Installation Dinner on 15 January 2022 to install Dr Andrew Solamandan as its Chairman. Upon sharing notes with the Director of Negeri Sembilan Health Department Dato' Dr Harlina Bt Abdul Rashid, who was the chief guest of the evening, it was revealed that our Negeri Sembilan Branch has a good working relationship with the state health department and they complemented each other well in handling the COVID-19 pandemic. It is a laudable effort by the branch, and I do congratulate them on this.

minded organisations, institutions and professionals are brought together to a common platform to provide sustainable solutions to the possible long term mental health impact of COVID-19. But from what I saw at the meeting, the coalition is indeed poised to go further in tackling mental health issues in this country. Having the inclusion of young professionals does indeed give a different dynamic approach to the efforts of this coalition.

MMA has made efforts towards being an inclusive association rather than an exclusive one and these efforts are bearing fruits. We have reached out to other medical



Amanda (FTF Creators Studio), Dr Rajagopal (Lincoln Univ College), PDG Siti (NCMW), Ms Sitra Panirsheelum (The Mind Faculty), Dato Bindi Rajasegaran (Rotary Malaysia District 3300), Dr KC Koh, Dr Raj Kumar (NCMW)

The National Coalition for Mental Wellbeing (NCMW) of which MMA is a member, has now been officially registered with the Registrar of Companies. It was established in August 2020 as an initiative of Rotary Malaysia with the aim to provide strategic guidance through coordinated efforts in the context of mainstreaming mental health issues in Malaysia via the centralised leadership of NCMW. Various like-

organisations and the response has been good. MMA is viewed favourably and there is hope that this may be a drive towards the unity of the medical fraternity. Each of us are different in our own ways and we adopt different approaches to health policy matters, but if we can all open up to each other in commonality, a reform in healthcare will be a definite possibility sooner than you think. **BMMMA**