



President's Message

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Another month filled with activities for the Malaysian Medical Association. Our sections and committees and societies are back with a vigour with many ongoing and projected programs after a hiatus forced upon us by the still ongoing pandemic. All are reminded that we are already halfway into the current term. The sections, committees and societies have only half a year left to make good on their programs for this term.

Our branches have been actively involved in CSR activities and those that have yet to embark on it are encouraged to do so. MMA is an association that not only looks after the welfare of its doctors but also the people who are the recipients of healthcare.

As we move towards endemicity, the role to be played by the private sector, which includes the general practitioners as well as the private hospitals, is crucial for the management of the COVID-19 situation as well as for the whole healthcare system. Public Private Partnerships in healthcare cannot be played down and is an important component to be strengthened on the path to healthcare reform.

Starting with the mass screening of COVID-19 cases, opening of private PKRCs (COVID-19 Low Risk Quarantine and Treatment Centre), CAC Gps (COVID-19 Assessment Centre), the highly successful PICK (National COVID-19 Immunisation Programme) and decanting of patients from public to private

hospitals, it is evident that both the public and private healthcare sectors should work as a team.

The eCOVID system which will be rolled out soon will greatly improve the management of COVID-19 positive individuals from the point of testing all the way to hospital admissions. Teething issues will be seen with any new system and I am glad to see that engagements are being done at various levels including the private primary care sector where we will see a high usage of this system. We hope that eCOVID will be up and running by the time this issue of BERITA is published.



Recipient receiving mock cheque from Prof Dr Jayakumar (Chairman, MMA Foundation) as Dr Koh looks on

I would like to thank the contributors of the Flood Relief Fund for GP clinics which were badly affected by the floods. We had the cheque presentation ceremony on 20 February 2022 at MMA House. Professor Dr Jayakumar Gurusamy, Chairman of the MMA Foundation did the honour of presenting the cheques to the affected doctors who were present.



Dr Eratha, Prof Dr Jayakumar, Dr Koh, Dr Bala & cheque recipients

It was indeed sobering to hear the accounts of how their clinics were destroyed but their determination to stand back up on their own two feet were inspiring to say the least. However, there are now reports of impending floods in the East Coast of Peninsular Malaysia. Our only hope is that the government is better prepared to manage any eventual flooding that will befall this nation.

MMA spoke out for the 15 year old girl who was charged with murder for the killing of her newborn. Though MMA has been speaking up for the medical fraternity throughout the years, it could not stand aside in this case where clearly the mental state of this young mother was in question. We had all these while been calling out on the problem of unplanned pregnancies, more so when it involves teenage mothers, not to mention the under aged ones.

Infanticides need to be curbed at source. For every abandoned newborn which is saved, how many were either killed or died after being discarded? Food for thought for a nation that is aspiring to be up there among the best in terms of healthcare. A social issue no doubt but which can't be ignored by those in the provision of healthcare.

The announcement that 3,586 permanent positions will be given out to the contract doctors this year was accepted with joy at the recent town hall meeting with the Honorable Health Minister and Director General of

Health in attendance. This is a significant milestone in the longstanding effort to look into the welfare of the contract doctors.

However, it is not enough as the offer of 1,500 permanent positions for medical officers, dental officers and pharmacists per year for the next three years is indeed a dismal number which will hardly resolve the contract doctors issue. We will be engaging with the Ministry of Health further on this.

There were other issues that were brought up at the town hall meeting to which both the Health Minister and the Director General of Health had agreed will be brought up for discussion within the government. One of these is the HLP (Federal Training Prize Program) where the Health Minister has made good on his promise to resolve.

The Health Minister has announced that he will be coming up with a white paper on healthcare reforms. As MMA has indicated that healthcare reforms is what is needed to bring our country forward and is committed to it, the Health Minister has agreed that MMA should be involved in the consultative process of this paper. We look forward to being engaged on this issue.

Throughout the years, there have been proposals to do something about our aging MMA House. Rebuilding from scratch had been considered many a times before. Discussions and negotiations with potential partners to develop the building have not borne fruit. Therefore it had been decided by Council that MMA House be refurbished to fit its purpose and to also look the part in this day and age. I hope that the makeover of MMA House can at least begin in this current term and will culminate into a building that we can all be proud of.

Before I end my message, I would like to extend an apology to the Negeri Sembilan Branch for the error in referring to the Pahang Branch as regards the wonderful Installation Dinner for its current Chairman, Dr Andrew Solamadan. BMMA

Errata:

There was an error in the President's Message (page 8, 2nd column, 2nd paragraph, first sentence) in the February issue of the Berita MMA 2022. It should read "The Negeri Sembilan Branch had its Annual Installation Dinner on 15 January 2022 to install Dr Andrew Solamadan as its Chairman." The error is regretted.