



President's Message

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In 1949, the General Assembly of the World Medical Association (WMA) adopted the International Code of Medical Ethics (ICoME). This code outlines the guidelines, norms and central duties of the medical profession. Different countries have their own code of medical ethics which guides and governs the way medical professionals practice in each country. Though different for each country, they share similar core principles which have been adapted for their use.

As the world has come a long way since 1949, WMA appointed a workgroup in 2018 to revise this seminal document. Since then, the workgroup has worked on the document with its efforts spanning the period of the COVID-19 pandemic.

These four long years have not been wasted as the workgroup members and observers from more than 20 countries have got together to give their input on the revision which have been enriched by four regional conferences, a dedicated conference on physician conscientious objection, a

global public consultation along with comments from WMA members.

One of the regional conference was held in Bangkok on 7-8 June 2022 where MMA was represented. It was an intensive two days of brainstorming on the revised draft of the International Code of Medical Ethics.

Following that will be the conference on physician conscientious objection in Jakarta on 4-5 July 2022 where MMA will also be represented.

It is anticipated to be another fiery session.

All these will end in Washington DC on 11-12 August 2022 when a final expert meeting will be held whereby the draft will be analysed for thoroughness and consistency before it is submitted to the WMA Council, and if approved, will be



President and President Elect



President chairing a session



President making a point



Workgroup members and observers

submitted to the General Assembly for adoption.

The following is the address made during the session in Bangkok, chaired by myself.

Ever since the beginning of modern medicine, also known as evidence based medicine, there has been a constant challenge to ensure that medical practitioners stay true to the ethical path when managing their patients. The medical fraternity has been self governing along with the legal framework that is in place by governments the world over to ensure that patients are protected.

Granted that throughout the ages, there have been charlatans that proclaim miracle cures, and the quacks that profess to be medical doctors when they are not, but at no time in history where with the advent of information technology and social media that the onslaught on the fortress of medical ethics been so massive like it is now.

There are those proclaiming that they are medical practitioners when clearly they aren't, thanks to the ease of getting dubious online qualification; and what about those who produce

research papers which are clearly cut and paste jobs from work done by others; then there are those who spout research proclaimed as advances in the field of medical science when clearly they are works of 'art' to deceive the masses including the medical community.

With social media aiding in the proliferation of telemedicine, governing of online medical practice is a mammoth task for all regulators of the medical profession.

Big pharma is also an issue that is recognised as one that all medical practitioners should be wary off.

The challenges facing us are many and the International Code of Medical Ethics is an important document that will serve as a crucial guide to the practice of ethical medicine.

MMA has always believed that the future belongs to our young and that they should be given the opportunity to mould themselves as the future leaders of the medical profession. To this end, the MMA has always been very supportive of our Society of MMA Medical Students (SMMAMS). Time and again, SMMAMS has shown the

mettle of its young members. This time around, they have showcased their organising capabilities by working together with the International Federation of Medical Students Associations to hold the Asian Pacific Regional Meeting meant for the medical students. To date, they have registered participants from 17 countries who will congregate in the Klang Valley for a whole week from 26 June – 2 July 2022.

We are aware of the White Paper on Health that will be tabled in Parliament by the Health Minister soon. It will be a mammoth task with proposals that may prove unpopular with the masses. However, it must be done to avoid a broken health system, but encourage one that is resilient and has the ability to adapt to future health crises.

Engagements with stakeholders are being conducted and we hope to see a proposed white paper that will ensure a healthcare system that offers safe, equitable and affordable healthcare for all. **BMMA**