

A word from the President

MMA Health Carnival

At the time this was written, we were just days away from our nationwide MMA Health Carnival 2020 – probably the biggest ever event we have organised. We had achieved quite a lot in terms of securing support and sponsorship and many might have thought that it was almost impossible to achieve within a short time.



I would like to thank all who have contributed their time and effort in making this Health Carnival possible. A special

acknowledgement to the staff under the leadership of COO Rissa for their hard work and dedication in putting it all together. Many had gone above and beyond the call of duty to make this Health Carnival a great success.

More importantly, I hope the Health Carnival will be the first of many MMA CSR initiatives. As doctors, we need to take the lead in actively promoting health, prevention of diseases as well as the need to highlight health-related issues affecting the nation. It is good to note

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that we will be starting the New Year with a Health Carnival. It is hoped these CSR efforts will continue for the years to come. I believe there is much more we can do to contribute to the care of our nation.

Deregulation of GP Fees

History was made on 6 December 2019 when the Health Minister made the announcement to deregulate the fees of General Practitioners. The minister, in 1.5 months, addressed an issue that wasn't solved for 27 years!

While it is not a harmonisation of the fee schedule that we were hopeful for, it is still much welcomed news for our GPs. On behalf of all GPs, I wish to thank our Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad for taking this bold decision and for keeping his word in saying that he will look into the issues we were having with regards to the stagnant GP fee schedule.

The news must have also come as a great relief to many of our GPs who were struggling to keep their clinics afloat with the high operational costs, however I wish to stress that we should safeguard this freedom given, to determine the consultation fees for our patients by ensuring reasonable fees are charged. I also hope that this will not be looked at as an “opportunity” for some. I wish to warn again, that MMA is against the practice of undercutting. Doctors in remote areas should also not take the opportunity to charge higher fees. These monopolistic practices will work against our profession in the long run.

There is however, still much to do before its full implementation. The Health Minister has mentioned that there will soon be engagements with stakeholders to work out the finer details. Dr Arasu and myself will be keep you updated on our meetings and talks with the ministry.

As doctors, we need to take the lead in actively promoting health

Proposed Poisons Act Amendment

There was much concern in December over the proposed amendments to the Poisons Act. The Bill, which was listed as the first item on Parliament's Order Paper, was up for its second reading and debate before Thursday (5 December 2019).

The proposed amendment sought to penalise private doctors, dental surgeons, and veterinarians with a maximum fine of up to RM50,0000 or five year's imprisonment, or both, should doctors refuse to provide prescription slips upon request by patients. In response, we issued a strongly worded press statement urging the health Minister to withdraw the bill. Many other medical organisations had also voiced their concerns.

In response, the government had decided to postpone the second reading of the proposed tabling to the next parliament sitting in March this year. We welcome this decision and the decision by the health minister to engage with stakeholders to seek more views before the tabling of the bill.

Making Vaccinations Mandatory

We were saddened to hear of the three month old Malaysian baby boy that had been diagnosed with poliomyelitis as reported in December. It is also saddening to think that this could have been prevented with a simple Inactivated Polio Vaccine (IPV) vaccination that is available free of charge. The last case of Polio reported in Malaysia before this was in 1992.

The immunisation schedule in Malaysia, which includes IPV, lists the recommended vaccines from birth to 15 years of age. However, none of the vaccines are mandatory, despite all of the diseases being either life-threatening or potentially crippling.

Taking into account the polio outbreak in neighbouring Philippines and the influx of foreign workers and tourists, MMA had urged the government to make vaccinations in our immunisation schedule mandatory for all Malaysians as the full medical history of foreigners (documented or undocumented) entering the country may not be known.



With Tun Dr Siti Hasmah



Speaking at the SMMAMS conference on Mental Health held in mid-December

Happy 2020

2019 did end on a good note for our GPs however there is much yet to be done and issues that still need to be addressed. But as with every New Year, I would like to remain positive and look to 2020 with hope.

I take this opportunity to wish all members a Happy New Year and to all my Chinese colleagues, Gong Xi Fa Cai! Last but not least, a Happy Birthday to all the January babies! **BMMMA**



Meeting with MACC Chief Commissioner



A session with Hon. Finance Minister