

President's Message

Dr John Chew Chee Ming
 president@mma.org.my
 johnchew23@gmail.com
 President



From left to right: Assoc Prof Dr Andrew, Dr John Chew and Dr Thana

if we cannot go overseas for subspecialisation with the meagre budget, we have to develop our own program here. We have enough talents here to start our own program. It just needs contributions from everybody.

At the recent CMAOA (Confederation of Medical Associations of Oceania and Asia) Symposium in Kanchaburi, Thailand on Healthcare In Danger, we heard of the deliberate bombings of healthcare facilities in Syria and Pakistan, in spite of the presence of the Universal sign of Red Crescent or Red Cross. Healthcare providers' lives were lost with their patients in

the course of their duties. We call all to respect the humanitarian work of these non-combatants.

Here at home, we heard of public shaming of doctors by patients and relatives who were unhappy with their care in the social media. Some were physically abused. We are saddened by the physical assault on a doctor in the ground of Serdang Hospital this week. We call for all to set in place training program for law enforcement agencies to protect our doctors.

The recently released National Health and Morbidity Survey 2015 showed our poor health as a Nation. I want to highlight five major concerns:

1. About 20% of our population have hypertension with more than 50% not previously diagnosed.
2. It is the same for diabetics.
3. 20% of our population is obese but 50% of us are overweight.
4. More than 20% of us still smoke, despite the campaigns by ASH committee. We are going to face an avalanche of strokes, heart attacks, renal failure in the very near future if we do not control these NCDs.
5. More than 20% has mental health problems. These patients are often not being treated because of the social stigmata. We don't talk about it often

I am very honoured to be speaking to you all from our Nation's Capital, Kuala Lumpur during the Wilayah Branch's 2016 Annual Dinner and Installation Night. This is the Political centre, the financial and business centre where big decisions are made. The City is one of the main drivers of our nation's economy. You have many centres of excellence here. We send our young and brightest minds here to be trained and many make their home here. Thank you, indeed for training them. You are in a very privileged position.

The landscape of medical practice is changing rapidly due to the ongoing difficult economic climate. This austerity drive has directly made an impact on our patient care. It is a challenge to deliver good medical service with limited resources. We had been here before. I came back to Malaysia as a Specialist Anaesthetist in 1985 when Malaysia was awashed with the BMF scandal. As a temporary medical officer, I was taking home RM1360 per month. It was two and half years before my Specialist Allowance was paid. It was really a windfall when I got it. Although the pay was meagre, I was most happy and satisfied with the challenges and work at the General Hospital. New equipment to replace the old ones never came. Supplies dried up by October. Bad times are only temporary. During this austerity times, we have to build up our ingenuity and resilience. We have to undo our entitlement psyche. My parents paid for my medical education, and I worked as I studied for my post graduate. Now,

enough, realising it too late. Yesterday I attended the funeral of my daughter's friend. She was only 18 years old. Many lives are at risk and the pain and suffering of the loved ones left behind could be avoided if we could intervene early. Prof Manium just told me we have 700 to 800 suicides a year in Malaysia. He is organising the first International Congress of Suicide Prevention in July 2017 in Kuching.

Faced with all these problems, what should we do? We have to re-examine our roots. Why do we become doctors in the first place? We have to return to our values of professionalism, compassion, and always doing our best for our patients. We must be agents of change in our communities. Lead we must, to make a difference.

One example is Leo Buscaglia who said:

"Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring, all of which have the potential to turn a life around."

Leo Buscaglia 1924-1998

The mission of Leo Buscaglia Foundation is building community spirit by helping people to help others. The story started when Dr Buscaglia met a Chinese refugee, Mr Wong, who with his family lived in extreme poverty in Hong Kong. Dr Buscaglia paid for Mr Wong's English tuition fee to help him to be gainfully employed after learning English. Many years later, Mr Wong wrote back to Dr Buscaglia to repay back what he saw as a "debt". Through this experience, the Foundation was started around the idea of sharing and giving, influencing others to do the same and the simple act of showing love.

Specialist Tax Updates

LHDN/MMA/ASMPM had a meeting on 12 October. This would be the fourth meeting between MMA and LHDN this year. The two associations made a strong appeal to LHDN to start the new tax treatment of Specialists from 2016. Specialists have been faithfully submitting their income returns under Sendirian Berhad for more than 30 years, with professional help from tax accountants and duly audited by LHDN themselves. We are still anxiously waiting for a favourable answer.

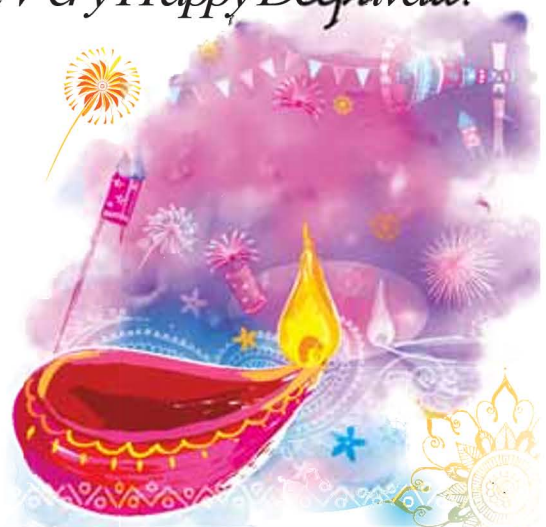
The Deputy Director General Datuk Nizom assured the two Associations that LHDN would favourably considered the appeal but the 9 September letter by DG LHDN would apply pending the decision. He reiterated the voluntary disclosure could be done with a simple letter declaring the YA 2013, 2014 and 2015 Sdn Bhd and personal incomes as in *Lampiran 3*, together asking LHDN to transfer the tax credit of the Sdn Bhd to personal. As the General Amnesty of February 2016 for voluntary disclosure will end by 15 December 2016, all settlements must be completed by that date to only be penalised the 15% penalty rate for the unpaid tax. Audit after that date will incur a penalty rate of 45% and five years back assessment.

As a general advice to our members, I urge all members urgently to seek tax experts to look through their personal accounts and to avail themselves to the tax amnesty if applicable. Every case should be dealt with individually with the tax consultant assistance.

57th MMA AGM in Penang

Please save the dates 18-21 May 2017 for the 57th MMA AGM in Penang, the UNESCO World Heritage City. There are so many things to do in Penang. It will surely bring back childhood memories. The funicular train up the Penang Hill, the Snake Temple at Kek Lok Si Temple, the beaches, Penang Cendol, Penang Laksa, and MacCallister Sisters Chay Koay Toew. I am sure you are all looking forward to Penang.

*The Festival of Lights
is upon us as this is going to press
and I wish everyone
a Very Happy Deepavali!*



57TH MMA AGM IN PENANG

THE UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE CITY

St Giles Hotel Penang, 183, Jalan Magazine, 10300 Georgetown, Penang
18 – 21 May 2017