

A word from the President

Target Achieved! RM1 Million Raised for Our Healthcare Frontliners Fighting COVID-19

The Shopee MMA COVID-19 Fund, launched in April 2020 by the Malaysian Medical Association (MMA) and Malaysian Medical Association Foundation (MMAF) in collaboration with Shopee has raised a total of RM699,830 in online donations for frontline healthcare workers battling COVID-19. A cheque presentation was held at our MMA Headquarters on 30 June, with YB Dato' Dr Haji Noor Azmi Ghazali – Deputy Minister of Health, Ministry of Health, was our Guest of Honour.

The week before, MMAF President Datuk Doraisingam (along with Dato' Kevin Yong, Dato' Sri Redzuan Mohanan Abdullah, Dato' Prakadeesh Kumar and Mr Thanasekaran) jointly donated RM100,000 towards the fund. Collectively, MMA, MMAF and Shopee had raised a total RM964,881 for the COVID-19 Fund.

We are truly grateful, and wish to thank Datuk Doraisingam for agreeing to contribute the shortfall to achieve a contribution of RM1 million. All proceeds from the fund will be channelled via the MMA Foundation towards the welfare and needs of frontline healthcare workers affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

One of the highlights at the cheque presentation was when our Deputy Minister of Health proudly showed media and guests his MMA lifetime membership card. We were indeed pleasantly surprised! MMA once again wishes to thank YBhg Dato' Dr Haji Noor Azmi for being our guest of honour.

We also wish to thank Shopee and their team once again for their support, MOH, MMAF President Datuk Doraisingam, Dato' Kevin Yong, Dato' Sri Redzuan Mohanan Abdullah, Dato' Prakadeesh Kumar and Mr V. Thanasekaran and all who have contributed in toward the fund for our frontliners.



YB Dato' Dr Haji Noor Azmi Ghazali showing his MMA lifetime membership card



Cheque presentation ceremony for the Shopee-MMA COVID-19 Fund



Cheque presentation to MMA Foundation by Donors



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Transparency Needed for Approval of Rapid Test Kits

On 12 July, MMA issued a press statement urging MOH to instruct MDA to publish the list of approved Rapid Antigen and Antibody Test Kits on their website (public domain). In the statement, we expressed our deep concern over the lack of transparency in the approval process of these test kits. After numerous meetings with government agencies and requests in the best interest of public health and safety, it seems to have fallen on deaf ears.

MDAs website clearly states that "This facility is provided to enable any interested parties to search for registration of medical device under Section 15 of Medical Device Act 2012 (Act 737). Any party who wishes to know whether a particular medical device is registered under Act 737 may search the device by inserting the device name or registration number in the searching field below."

The Special Cabinet Committee on Anti-Corruption had agreed in principle on 25 June with the recommendation of the Malaysia Productivity Corporation (MPC) for all ministries and agencies that issue permits and licenses to provide guidelines for license applications that must be published online. On top of this, a letter dated 5 June from the Ministry of Health, clearly stated that the GPs should only use the COVID-19 Antibody Rapid Test Kits approved by the MDA.

On 11 June, the MOH had updated latest guidelines on the Home Assessment Tool. "On the 13th day, you are required to undergo a COVID-19 serological test at a private health clinic / clinic approved by Ministry of Health. Ensure that you get a copy of the laboratory result" it said, referring to the 13th day under quarantine. Following this, on 1 July, an infographic on "Ujian Antibodi COVID-19 di klinik swasta" was issued. These matters that can have a direct impact on the health and lives of the public have been poorly managed and coordinated.

Without the published list and lack of transparency, there is no control over the use of the various kits and no verification process. The press statement was published on several online and print media platforms. The very next day, MDA had written to MMA disclosing the list of approved rapid test kits.

Need for Equal Opportunities for Doctors to Specialise Locally

The Malaysian Medical Association (MMA) had expressed its disappointment over the response given by the Health Minister on the situation with Medical Officers wishing to pursue specialisation in the country under the government.

Health Minister Dato' Sri Dr Adham Baba had in a written parliament reply stated that "Although contract medical officers are not eligible to be offered the *Hadiah Latihan Persekutuan (HLP)* at this time, they can still further their specialist study through self-financing or outside sponsorship and further their studies abroad."

According to the reply, currently, 23,928 permanent Medical Officers (MO) have not yet pursued specialist study, with the Ministry of Health (MOH) – an amount the Ministry considers suitable for the number of extra specialists it needs.

In our statement, we warned about a possible shortfall in specialists and brain drain if there is no continuity in training for specialisation – much needed to maintain our high standards of care. We had projected 13,000 specialists by 2020 but we are currently we are at 8,000 at both private and government hospitals. We had also called for more engagement in addressing these issues towards achieving universal healthcare.

Meeting with MMI

A meeting was held for the first time between MMA, SMMAMS and Malaysian Medics International (MMI) on 15 July at our MMA Headquarters.

MMI was established in 2013 to provide a professional environment for Malaysian medical students to network, keep themselves updated with healthcare issues and develop essential skills for a career in medicine in Malaysia. They currently have four country branch councils seated in the United Kingdom, Malaysia, Ireland and Australia.

In addition, the group has also set up MMI Doctors and MMI Young Medics to cater to their specific needs. At present, their global network also includes New Zealand, China and India, all of which were established as a Chapter, represented by International Ambassador(s). At the meeting, we discussed ways SMMAMS and MMI can work together especially on issues faced by our junior doctors.

Virtual AGM

I am pleased to note that our first ever "Zoom AGM" went on smoothly without a glitch. Kudos to all those who helped make it possible. SOPs were well observed and we saw more than the usual 50 members participating from each of the states.

However, we had hoped to see more participation from our younger members seeing that it was a virtual AGM. About 190 had registered but only 90 actually participated, despite it being made more convenient and with no physical presence of registrants required.

We hope to see more active participation from our young doctors as most of the current issues we face directly affect them. PPS and SCHOMOS have fought long, hard battles over the years on issues affecting our doctors and the profession therefore it is important to continually be engaged.

Last but not least, I also wish to take this opportunity to wish all members a Happy 63rd Merdeka. The celebrations this time around will be different but definitely one to remember!

To all our August babies, Happy Birthday!

Stay safe! BMMA