

A Word from the President

The 26 September 2020 was the date that I officially took over the reins as MMA President at the first ever virtual AGM. Surprisingly, the virtual platform hosted from our headquarters in KL had attracted a larger participation from members. It was quite an experience and I shall never forget the marathon session spent deliberating and passing resolutions that should rightfully have a place in the Malaysia Book of Records!

Two months have swiftly passed and I must say I have never been this busy in my life, with press statements and interviews held with the media almost daily. At times, the rock-star attention can be quite tiring even when I am miles away in Ipoh.

However, the media coverage has indeed helped MMA gain a louder voice, thus increasing our reach over various media platforms. We've seen some progress for the situation for our junior doctors, with MOH's recent decision to promote our contract medical officers from Grade UD41 to Grade UD43. This enables them to earn the same emoluments as their permanent counterparts, but their long term needs have still not been addressed.

It was a major disappointment that there was absolutely no mention of permanent positions for the healthcare workforce in Budget 2021 and this comes at a time when the country is facing an unprecedented pandemic!

Budget 2021 appears to have also forgotten our GPs who are currently facing probably the worst time in their professional lives. In our Budget 2021 wish-list, we had asked for various tax relief initiatives to aid private GPs, as private clinics were among the worst hit sectors due to the pandemic. But disappointingly, there were no initiatives to aid this important component of our country's healthcare.

In November, we again highlighted the need for public-private healthcare collaboration in managing COVID-19, along with the nation's other healthcare needs. With public healthcare focusing its efforts on fighting the pandemic, it would be timely for MOH to consider the outsourcing of healthcare services such as NCD management or antenatal care to the private clinics, or elective operations to private specialists.

Recent news of the government's plans to make COVID-19 swab tests compulsory for foreign workers in all sectors in several states is a welcomed move that may provide some relief for private GPs, but more details will be needed on this.



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November was also a busy month for MMA, as we were occupied in doing our part to provide aid to hospitals in need of support in the fight against COVID-19. Sabah was of course a priority in these efforts. The arrangements to donate medical equipment, PPE and other much needed items to the hospitals were arranged during my recent visit to the MMA headquarters in KL – all within a day. I would like to extend my deepest appreciation to our Exco and the MMA branches for helping to coordinate this effort and wish to thank all corporate donors for their kind contributions and support in helping to make it possible.

I also wish to take this opportunity to encourage members to join our MMA co-operative, which is the

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main partner of eMedAsia. I do believe this will be beneficial in a number of ways if you take advantage of the opportunity now. The English got it wrong with the saying “Good things come to those who wait”. But I say “There is no better time than NOW” so do make arrangements to sign up!

Lastly, I would like to wish all our Christian members a Merry Christmas!

A brand new year is also around the corner and with it a feeling of hope. Like everyone else, I sure hope next year will be better!

To all MMA members, here's to a Happy 2021!

Take care and stay safe! **BMMMA**