

There were no clear guidelines on how to conduct the COVID-19 screening of workers

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A word from the President



Updates on the COVID-19 Situation

Many business sectors have resumed operations after the announcement of the Conditional Movement Control Order (CMCO) that has now been extended to 9 June 2020. We are now seeing a consistency of double digits in the number of daily cases of COVID-19 reported and on 13 May 2020, it was reported that the R0 has been reduced to 0.3 – a significant improvement from the R0 of 3.5 reported just before the start of the MCO on 18 March 2020. It was also reported on 11 May 2020 that public compliance was at 95%.

Clearly, the strategies by the health ministry to contain the spread of infections, prevent further community spread and flatten the curve are now seeing the desired results. We were also informed that a number of our frontliners now have some time to take a much deserved break.

These are encouraging signs indeed, however we must remain vigilant and not let our guard down against the enemy. The Health DG has expressed concern over a possible second wave with the emergence of new clusters that have been reported. More businesses resuming operations and a major festive season at end May/early June are further fuelling concerns.

SOCSCO Prihatin Screening Programme

On 10 May 2020, MMA went to the press after much confusion and frustration caused by the government's flip-flopping policies – there were no clear guidelines on how to conduct the COVID-19 screening of workers under the SOCSCO PSP.

Employers were calling private clinics to arrange for appointments for their workers to be tested but our GPs were not able to conduct the tests without proper guidelines from

MOH. MMA has advised the GPs not to perform antibody RTK without clear guidelines on the usage of antibody RTKs, infection prevention and control protocols, interpretation guidelines & quarantine criteria that are yet to be received from MOH. It was earlier agreed that the RTK antibody were going to be used as the screening method.

We had even received a call from MOH informing us that SOCSCO would be launching the RTK Antibody tests for our workers with the participation of our GPs. During a meeting with SOCSCO's top management, we were also told that the screening of workers would be initiated through the GP clinics on their HSP panel. Just days after this meeting, we were informed that under the SOCSCO screening programme, only the RT-PCR method of screening will be used.

Adding further to the confusion was the announcement by the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI) that Companies may resume business operations from 4 May 2020 without an approval letter from MITI and that COVID-19 screening of workers is not mandatory. This was opposed to its earlier announcement for a requirement to screen all workers.

MMA had issued a press statement expressing our frustration on these matters. Do look out for updates on this.

MMA Annual General Meeting

An online AGM may be held for the first time in MMA's history, as we are not able to have our planned AGM in June due to the COVID-19 situation and restrictions under the CMCO. Please do look out for updates. Until then, I will humbly continue to serve as MMA President.

Shopee MMA COVID-19 Fund

It gives me great pleasure to announce that the Shopee MMA COVID-19 Fund that we launched at the start of April this

year had raised RM532,500.00 to date (18 May 2020). I wish to thank all who have contributed towards this fund. This is indeed a great example of thinking out-of-the box for a good cause. I am truly delighted with this successful collaboration between MMA, MMA Foundation and Shopee and look forward to other ways we can work together in the future.

Indeed, if not for Shopee, I doubt we would have been able to raise such a substantial amount on our own with the level of commitment and support from our members. Sadly, from our 13,000 members, only about 100 doctors donated towards this cause. Such is the level of support from our doctors for their colleagues battling COVID-19 day and night on the frontlines. And we wonder why many have a negative view of doctors.

Had each of our 60,000 doctors donated a simple, tiny contribution of RM10, we would have raised RM600,000. It is really that simple. What a difference that would have made. But sadly, even RM10 seems to be unaffordable.

I rest my case.

But there are some colleagues we can truly be proud of. Please do read on.

Doctors Making a Difference

Two doctors deserve mention in this month's Berita. I was so impressed with their spirit of service that I had to share the work and accomplishments of these two fine gentlemen here in my monthly message.

Dr Jeshua Navaraj, 29 years old and currently practicing at Hospital Kuala Lumpur, is the founder of Malaysian Health Diplomacy Foundation (MHDF). MHDF is a member of the Malaysian Health Coalition and is a division under My Diplomacy (Malaysian Youth Diplomacy) under the Youth Taskforce for Foreign Affairs and Diplomacy. MHDF's vision is to improve health and reduce the inequities through implementation of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

MHDF is one of the founding members of #RumahKita – a movement to assist hospital frontliners through reaching out and uniting Malaysians to assist our hospitals.

Recently, MHDF also organised a webinar on Parenting during MCO and collaborated with MMA on a webinar themed



MMA donated 88 boxes of facemasks to Hospital Selayang last month



MMA donated 15 boxes of Quaker Oats to refugees from various countries through Malaysian Social Research Institute (MSRI)

COVID-19 vs Malaysia which featured esteemed panellists Professor Jomo Kwame Sundram, Dr Amar Singh HSS, Dr Khor Swee Kheng and Dr Fifa Rahman.

MHDF has also organised breakout sessions on Mental Health and Cyberbullying with the UM Law Society and are currently collaborating with UM's School of Public Health on the policy drafting with regards to Cyberbullying and Mental Health (on hold now due to the MCO). What is truly amazing is MHDF is only four months old!

I am also truly impressed with the good work of Dr Naren Selva, a 35 year old Senior Doctor from Klinik Kesihatan Lukut in Port Dickson and Mr Hemen Selva, a 24 year old final year medical student with Universiti Kuala Lumpur Royal College of Medicine Perak & MMA student member. Together, the two had formed coalition of doctors, nurses, a physiotherapist, and some medical students from Seremban in initiating a 'Donate A Mask Campaign'

to make it easier for people to donate face masks and other PPE directly to frontliners. Dr Naren himself is one of the frontliners taking samples from Persons Under Investigation (PUIs) on a daily basis.

As many of you would know even from personal experience in your practice, we had issues in the supply of PPE. But rather than complain, Dr Naren chose to think out-of-the-box for a solution. The Donate A Mask Campaign led to a total of 30,500 face masks, thousands of face shields, and many litres of hand sanitisers that were donated towards this cause. MMA is now a co-partner of this initiative and all donated items are now directed to MMA House. We at MMA are delighted to be part of this initiative and Dr Naren recently thanked MMA for its help and support.

Selamat Hari Raya Aidilfitri

I would like to take this opportunity to wish our Muslim colleagues and friends Selamat Hari Raya Aidilfitri. To our East Malaysian colleagues, I do hope that even under such restrictions, you will still have a meaningful time celebrating Pesta Kaamatan and Hari Gawai Dayak with family and friends.

And finally, to all those celebrating their birthdays in June, I wish you a Happy Birthday!

Stay safe and take care. **BMAA**

Errata

There was an error in the caption of the second photograph on page 8 in the previous issue (Berita MMA May'20, Vol. 50, No 5). It should read "MMA presenting a mock cheque for RM10,000 to the Minister of Health for donation to Tabung COVID-19" The error is regretted.