

# President's Message



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## Press Conference – Junior Doctors' Positions

On 13 November 2019, MMA held a press conference to highlight issues experienced by our junior doctors and demanded that the government act on these matters. Apart for the long wait for housemen and compulsory service posts as medical officers (MOs) in government healthcare facilities, our MOs are given contract positions as there are limited permanent positions for them in government healthcare. Not only are they faced with the uncertainty of contract positions, contract MOs (UD41) are given lower remuneration compared to their permanent position MO (UD44) colleagues. Imagine how this can affect the morale of the contract MOs.

We find this practice unacceptable and had together with the Malaysian Medics International (MMI), the Islamic Medical Association of Malaysia (IMAM), Malaysian Dental Association, the Section Concerning Dental Officers and Specialists (SCODOS) and Islamic Dental Association issued a joint press statement demanding the government act on these matters concerning our junior doctors – some of whom may want to specialise and require further training as MOs in our government healthcare system.

From January to November this year, 6,307 medical graduates were offered contract doctor posts. We have suggested that either the government increase the number of permanent posts or increase the contract duration so that doctors may have the opportunity to go for specialisation. On funding the employment of junior doctors in government healthcare facilities, we have suggested that it is high time the government look into increasing the encounter fee at government hospitals to between RM2-RM5.

## NACCOL's Decision for Another Impact Study on GP Fee Schedule Harmonisation

MMA issued a press statement expressing our utter disappointment concerning the National Cost of Living Action Council's (NACCOL) decision to carry out another impact study on the GP fee schedule harmonisation. We again reminded NACCOL and the Health Ministry that the harmonisation will have no direct impact on the cost of living given that there is the option of free government healthcare services. We hope our GPs are not given the run-around. MMA will act if there is no progress concerning this issue by December 2019. We have waited too long!



*Discussion between MMA, MOH and American Medical Association on licensing of CPT codes for our doctor's fee schedule.*



*WMA General Assembly 2019 (Tbilisi, Georgia) with Dr K. K. Aggarwal, the incoming WMA President, Dr Miguel Jorge and President Elect Prof Dato' Dr M. Subramaniam.*

## MMA Health Carnival

The venue has been set for MMA's Health Carnival 2020 in Kuala Lumpur. The National Land Finance Cooperative has confirmed providing their Bangunan Peladang in Petaling Jaya free of charge for our CSR programme. This has saved us a huge amount on rental costs. It is quite well run and there is ample space for booths, parking lots and is strategically located along the busy Old Klang Road.

Nearly 150 sponsorship letters have been sent out to potential sponsors, Ministers, Ministries, Government agencies as well as media and the response has been encouraging. We also have a Healthy Food company agreeing to provide healthy breakfast for 200pax. Professor Nathan Vytialigam, the Malaysian Healthy Ageing Society's Advisor, has agreed to provide speakers on 'Care for the Elderly' related topics while Global Doctors Hospital has volunteered to provide day-long CPR activities with their group. SMMAMS, our student body have also agreed to provide their members as volunteers to assist us. Most MMA state branches have already sent in their programmes. I am encouraged by the support shown especially from the Penang, Sarawak and Malacca MMA branches. We are looking forward to more developments in their programmes.

Finally, with Christmas just around the corner, it is my Christmas wish that our GPs fee schedule harmonisation and the issues of our junior doctors will be sorted out soon. I sincerely hope that this will be a Christmas gift to you from our government. We will continue to press on until real progress is made.

While I may not celebrate Christmas, I know that it is a time for giving. It may be a difficult time to think about giving especially when we have been waiting for many years to receive. I am of course referring to our GP fee schedule harmonisation, but I do believe that giving is the way forward for us all. We must go back to the meaningfulness of our profession.

Healthcare is the service we provide to the people, however many of us get caught up in the business

of healthcare. I sincerely believe that if we adopt more of an attitude of service, our situations will improve and our issues will be sorted out sooner rather than later. There will be no reason why it shouldn't. While many doctors have a selfless and caring attitude in service, I will be the first to admit that there is also a growing concern of the negative perception of doctors among the general public. To change this perception, we need to change and we have to be actively involved in the change to correct this perception.

In the good old days, becoming a doctor was a calling. People no longer regard the profession as a calling these days. But I would like to believe many of our medical graduates went into medicine out of the passion and 'calling' to serve. I feel for our junior doctors who go through the longer waits for their postings and positions as well as the anxiety and uncertainty of positions they go through in trying to begin their careers. I hope what MMA has done through the many press statements issued and the recent press conference on issues of our junior doctors will finally open the eyes of our leaders to the amount of talent they have before them waiting to serve our beloved country. I would like to remain optimistic and hope for good news this Christmas.

Aside from this, our CSR programme will be taking place in about a month and a half's time. Part of the programme will also consist of talks on awareness for organ donations. For MMA members who have not pledged to become a donor, I encourage you to take the time to consider signing up to become one.

The year 2019 is also coming to a close very soon. My New Year wish for you all is that you be blessed for all the sacrifices you have made in putting the care of your patients first, for the difference you have made in their lives and how you have provided the highest level of care to the people.

To all December babies, a Happy Birthday!  
To all my Christian colleagues,  
a very Merry Christmas, and to all MMA members,  
a Blessed and Happy 2020!