



# PPS Report

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Honorary Secretary,  
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## IS MMA only for the GPs?

Is MMA only for the GPs? It is a pertinent question flying around that bears a response. When I first started my involvement in MMA, SCHOMOS was actively trying to improve the lot of our doctors who are serving in the Ministry of Health. Their working conditions as well as financial remunerations were dismal. SCHOMOS did a good job then and the present group of Government doctors are reaping the fruits of SCHOMOS's labour.

Then came the issues affecting our private specialists. I am not too well versed with what happened during that time except that I was voicing out my opinion that MMA was not doing anything for the GPs. Most of the officebearers then were specialists.

Well, now the order of the day is the dilemma facing the GPs. There were calls for the GPs to start picketing amidst threats to boycott the MMA. Realising that there is a real need for our GPs to be represented, MMA took on the task of bringing the plight of the GPs to the forefront.

So, is the MMA only for the GPs? I think not. The MMA is for all of us doctors. The MMA comprises of doctors from all specialities and from both the private and Government sectors. So, naturally it is there to serve the interest of all doctors.

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There will come a time in the not too distant future when the distinction between a private sector doctor and a Government doctor will become blurred. We will all then be assimilated into a single healthcare system. So, a timely reminder to all to be involved with what is happening now to avoid being caught off guard. Never be one to say that since it doesn't affect me now, I can afford to be complacent.

## Technical Working Group on Primary Health Care in 1Care for 1Malaysia

The second meeting of the Technical Working Group (TWG) on Primary Health Care (PHC) in 1Care for 1Malaysia was held on 29 January 2011. This group had been set up with the intention of getting an input from all parties concerned whilst working towards the formation of a workable system for Primary Health Care in the proposed 1Care on health for all Malaysians.

Accusations (including one from yours truly) have been hurled towards the Academy of Family Physicians of Malaysia for having gone ahead on their own in setting up this working group without involving the Malaysian Medical Association. However, I would like to laud their efforts, as it seems to be positive. We do need to understand that all those on the TWG will somehow have their own particular reasons for participating. Whether it is the so called vested interest or the interest of the whole fraternity is not really important. What is important here is that communication is there between the MOH as well as all other parties concerned. I do hope that all interested parties, especially the MMA, are kept in the loop of things.

The first meeting was attended largely by MOH officers with a sprinkling of representatives from the various medical associations. The largest group of attendees from the private sector came from the Academy of Family Physicians of Malaysia. This led to an outcry from the other doctors and especially from MMA members for not having been informed of such an important happening. By and large, many General Practitioners felt that they should be included in the TWG.

This second meeting saw the attendance of many GPs who wanted to be in the know of things. There were GPs who felt that it was important for them to be there. Some attendees were representatives of their various associations or representatives of branches of the MMA.

It was good to see doctors who came from outside of the Klang Valley. They came from as far away as Cameron Highlands and even East Malaysia. Unlike most meetings involving the Health Ministry, this one was held in Kuala Lumpur on a Saturday afternoon and not in Putrajaya on weekdays, which enabled our private sector doctors to attend.

Many different aspects of the proposed PHC were discussed. It was admirable the way the meeting was handled. Everyone conducted themselves in a professional manner in spite of the differences of opinion in many matters that were discussed. Our doctors are learning that in order to allow for effective communication, the raising of voices and flaring of tempers should be curbed.

What was stressed during the meeting is that whatever the outcome of the discussions, it will be based on what we primary care doctors feel should be adopted

and that we are the ones who will give an input on what we want. Do we dare hope that this time, whatever is legislated will really be based on what the TWG finally comes up with? Or will it turn out to be like the recent Private Healthcare Facilities and Services Act (PHFSA) where apparently most of the items in the Act were never brought up during discussions with the relevant parties, and suggestions brought up were not given due importance?

Another positive point of note is that we had to sign an agreement of sorts that we are not to misuse the information obtained during TWG meetings as opposed to being subjected to the Official Secrets Act which was apparently in force during the discussions held on the PHFSA.

Our members are invited to write in to their respective state PPS Chairmen or to any of our PPS Exco to express their views on this. If there is a large enough volume of communication, we may request for a forum page to be printed in *Berita MMA*. Let us not sit on this and claim later on that we were not consulted and that we were sidelined. I always say that, "We are what we made ourselves to be." **M**



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