

The GP Conference & Scientific Meeting 2015



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The 3rd of October 2015, a day that will indeed go down as a historical day for General Practitioners (GPs) in this country. One thousand one hundred and forty (1,140) had registered, but more than 1,000 doctors from all over the country attended the first ever GP Conference & Scientific Meeting. Out of which more than 600 attendees were MMA members. More than 100 doctors flew in from Sabah and Sarawak, with another 500 plus doctors from greater Kuala Lumpur. The state of Kedah sent a strong contingent of more than 100 doctors. This event saw doctors from every state in Malaysia.



Attentive audience listening to a speech from the General Secretariat

The GP Conference & Scientific Meeting was jointly organised by MMA, Federation of Private Medical Practitioners' Associations Malaysia (FPMPAM) affiliated societies, Medical Practitioners Coalition Association of Malaysia (MPCAM) and *Pertubuhan Doktor-Doktor Islam Malaysia* (PERDIM). The GP Secretariat which was formed just three months before the event worked tirelessly to make it a success. MMA was represented by the Honorary General Secretary, Dr Ravi Naidu, and PPS Chairman, Dr Muruga Raj.



A very attentive DG with GP Secretariat listening to the presentation

We believe we managed to send a strong message that the General Practitioners in this beloved country who have been the pioneers and backbone of the primary care services, should not be neglected when various private primary healthcare policies are being drawn. We were pleased to see Dr Ahmad Razid bin Salleh who was there with his team of seven doctors from 8.00 am till 4.00 pm, listening and taking notes of grouses and suggestions from the GPs.

The keynote address was delivered by the Director General (DG) of Health, YBhg Datuk Dr Noor Hisham Bin Abdullah. The following is a small excerpt of his speech:

"I was invited to give the Keynote Address titled, 'The Future Role of GPs within the Healthcare Transformation' this afternoon at the first GP Conference & Scientific Meeting 2015 which saw more than 1,000 GPs coming together as one to address common issues of concern. This was then followed by an interactive Q & A session where many questions were posed by the GPs including the lack of integration between the public and private primary care services. We need to complement, converge and work together to ensure the best care is delivered to our patients. This must involve all levels from bottom up and top down. Engagement between all parties must be continuous and meaningful," Datuk Dr Noor Hisham Bin Abdullah wrote in his Facebook page.



The DG launches the "GP Patient Dengue Alert"

Highlights of the issues and actions proposed, and updates from the open forum and closed door meeting with Datuk Dr Noor Hisham and Dr Ahmad Razid bin Salleh are as below:

A. Rang Undang-Undang Farmasi:

Which was due to go to Parliament had been withdrawn to incorporate more feedback by stakeholders and also to be returned to the Ministry of Health.

B. Managed Care Organisations (MCOs) and/or Third Party Administrators (TPAs):

Serious concerns have been raised on the consequences of the current practises of differing MCO contracts which in practise may likely amount to serious breaches of good medical practice and the applicable laws, including the Act, the regulations and guidelines thereunder:

- To enforce the policies set in the spirit of the Act and the guidelines governing the private healthcare industry, including the MCOs/TPAs.

- To get the MCOs/TPAs to increase consultation fees, GP payment deadlines, report any "fee-splitting" or any request for discounts by MCOs/TPAs to 'Amalan', and also to alert the Malaysian Medical Council (MMC).

C. Foreign Workers Medical Examination Monitoring Agency (FOMEMA):

FOMEMA Sdn Bhd is the only concessionaire in Peninsular Malaysia to promote the well-being of the Malaysian society by safeguarding the health of people living, staying and working in Malaysia. Despite tremendous increase in the number of healthcare facilities and clinics providing service for foreign workers, the increase in the cost of medical facilities and its maintenance, the scheduled charges under the Act, and the fees paid to the doctors have remain unchanged for 17 years. There is absolutely no justification for healthcare facility providers of foreign workers to pay an unreasonable sum of RM4.00 as transmission fees to a TPA or "electronic messenger service provider" on an exclusive basis or at all. The three-year limit for compulsory medical examination of foreign workers is not suitable nor practical as there has been an increased incidence of communicable diseases such as tuberculosis, leprosy etc.

D. Growarisan Sdn Bhd

It is imperative for Growarisan to practise good, fair and transparent governance to all concerned in facilitating the above.

- To review and increase the private medical practitioners (PMP) fees to a fair and realistic number, bearing in mind that the current fees has remained unchanged for the past 17 years.



GP Secretariat engaging the participants

- To allow the PMPs the choice of laboratories for medical check-ups.
- The medical examination of foreign workers shall be mandatory for the entire duration of their employment in Malaysia.
- To withdraw the current system of PMP's requesting for additional quota by payment of extra fees to Growarisan. This can be construed as fee-splitting and thus be in conflict with MMC's ethical guidelines.

- In the event all the clinics in certain vicinity have utilised their quota of medical examination, a new quota shall be set where all clinics in that particular vicinity will have the option to examine the additional number of workers on a fair basis.

E. 1Malaysia Clinics

The greatest competition to the GPs was from the MoH itself, through their 1Malaysia Clinics even in urban areas. The DG has promised that from now onwards, if GP Clinics are already serving urban areas, then 1Malaysia Clinics will not be situated there.

While we are pleased with the numbers that turned up for this conference, the success of the event will only be determined by the results produced hereafter.



MMA President Dr Ashok Phillips addressing the GPs

Moving on to the activities of PPSMMA. We have initiated a series of stakeholder meeting starting with the Pharmaceutical Association of Malaysia (PhAMA) on 10 September 2015, followed by a meeting with 22 MCOs/TPAs on 30 September 2015 and a meeting with leading consumer associations in Malaysia.

The meeting with the TPAs was positive and they have agreed in principle to increase the consultation fees. Among those who attended were leading MCOs/TPAs such as:

No.	Managed Care Organisations
1	American International Assurance Bhd
2	ASIA Assistance Network (M) Sdn Bhd
3	Allianz Life Insurance Malaysia Bhd
4	ASP Medical Clinic Sdn Bhd
5	Crescent Solutions (M) / Tele Assist Sdn Bhd
6	CompuMed Services Sdn Bhd
7	Cynergy Care Sdn Bhd
8	Datalink Healthcard Network Sdn Bhd
9	Eximius Medical Administration Solutions Sdn Bhd
10	Great Eastern Life Assurance (M) Bhd

No.	Managed Care Organisations
11	International SOS (M) Sdn Bhd
12	MediExpress (M) Sdn Bhd / Health Connect Sdn Bhd
13	Metronic iCares Sdn Bhd
14	P.C.S. Rakyat Sdn Bhd
15	PMCare Sdn Bhd
16	Pra Assist Medical Network Sdn Bhd
17	Prudential Assurance Malaysia Bhd
18	Red Alert Online Sdn Bhd
19	Tejani Emergency Assistance (M) Sdn Bhd
20	Mondial Assistance
21	IA Assistance
22	Dytan Health On-Line Sdn Bhd

Both parties have requested for a series of dialogues to iron out issues faced by the GPs and TPAs. The principal of the agreement needs to be based on MCO guidelines while protecting the interest of patients. AIA being one of the leading MCOs, has requested for a separate meeting to further discuss our various requests.

The meeting held with consumer associations on 7 October 2015 was well attended by the Federation of Malaysian Consumers Associations (FOMCA), Penang Consumer Protection Association, Malaysian Alliance for Tobacco-Free Organisations, Education and Research Association for Consumers, Malaysia, National Consumers Complaint Centre, Consumer Associations of Subang and Shah Alam, and *Persatuan Pengguna Islam Malaysia*. The consumer associations were very pleased with the meeting, and have agreed to work together on national issues concerning policies that may affect consumers at large.

PPSMMA has also initiated a survey questionnaire for a study on MCOs/TPAs, FOMEMA and Growarisan. We have engaged a third party consultant to prepare a report backed with a survey by GPs.

We will also be involved with the Malaysian Healthcare System Research (MHSR) Team, National Financing Unit under the Planning Division of the MoH. In the absence of information or data on private primary care, MHSR has proposed to do a joint study.

The last five months have been a very hectic period for the PPSMMA team, nevertheless it has been a very fruitful and pleasing time, given the positive outcome for all the meetings we had.

***"We are only as strong as we are united,
as weak as we are divided"***

– J.K. Rowling