

**CONFEDERATION OF MEDICAL ASSOCIATIONS IN THE ASIA
AND THE OCEANIA (CMAAO)
PHILIPPINE MEDICAL ASSOCIATION
COUNTRY REPORT
Fiscal Year 2020-2021
Dr. Benito P. Atienza
President**

It is my distinct honour to address all of you, my dear colleagues in the medical profession. Allow me to report on the various undertakings and thrusts by the Philippine Medical Association (PMA) in aid of our goal of serving our respective constituents.

The PMA is the umbrella organization of physicians in the country. It is the only Accredited Professional Organization in the field of medicine recognized by the Philippine Professional Regulation Commission.

It consists of 17 regions, each headed by an elected regional governor, organized under them are 119 component societies scattered all over the nation. At present, there are 8 specialty divisions, 81 specialty and subspecialty societies and 47 affiliate societies.

As of September 4, 2020, our total number of members has reached **85,287**:

Life Members	14,941
Emeritus	2,419
Regular (active members)	34,759
New members	119
Total Active members	52,238
Inactive Members	33,049

We have decided to redesign the programs of the PMA in pursuant to the objectives of the Association.

1. Re-engineering or redesigning the PMA as an organization to make it more responsive to the changing needs of the members by decentralizing or devolving some of its powers to the local component societies;
2. Amending the by-laws to make it responsive to present and future situations;
3. Enhancing collaborative efforts with the government in the pursuit of National Health Objectives;
4. Assuring the general membership that we will be cautious in the management of its funds by applying the principles of transparency and accountability;
5. Continuing Professional Development for members that is parallel or aligned to global integration;
6. Enhance participation in environmental and climate change Advocacies;
7. Strengthen the non-discriminatory principle that every physician regardless of his field of interest and specialization has his or her place on the practice of medicine;
8. Commitment to constant dialogue with allied health professionals and allied health providers;
9. Increase its strength in constructive but cautious engagement with the regulatory bodies of government and the legislature; and,

10. Raising public awareness on the role of physicians as leaders and vanguards of people's health and well-being.

We will strive harder despite the challenges of this pandemic by providing our members the following key areas:

Caring of our Members and the Community

1. Find ways to improve Mutual and Legal Aid Benefits disbursement according to the criteria of the Commission.
2. Monitor the health status of every member thru the Component Society especially the seasoned members in this of pandemic.
3. Promote green clinic and hospitals with Covid-19 precautionary measures being observed.
4. Safety of all healthcare workers during the pandemic.
5. Allocated funds for disaster and calamity benefits for members and set guidelines.
6. Encourage the government to review the Magna Carta of health workers
7. Facilitated the bills payment scheme for members' annual dues.
8. Caring our respective community during the pandemic thru Telemedicine/Teleconsulta program.

Ethics

1. Encourage each component society and regions to create Committee on Ethics with incumbent governors as Chair and past Governors as members.
2. Creation of the Implementing Rules and Guidelines by PMA Commission on Ethics with PRC Board of Medicine which will serve as the annex to the newly approved Code of Ethics of the Medical Profession.
3. Promote the World Medical Association Declaration on Ethics of the Global Medical Profession.

Science

1. We continue to provide Continuing Professional Education to our members. The First National Virtual on September 6-9, 2020 with the

theme: “Hamon sa mga Pilipinong Manggagamot sa Panahon Ngayon”. This activity can accommodate 20,000 participants for free, by virtual conference via MS Teams/Zoom apps. Our topics for this year’s first virtual convention’s scientific lectures focused on: Telemedicine, Medical Exams, Virtual Practice of Medicine, Residency Training, Medical profession, Community, Schools, and the Work Place.

2. The PMA has ended a week long celebration of the yearly Medicine Week activity wherein several activities has been participated and done nationwide which includes, Free **Tele-Konsulta** (Tele-Consultation) manned by the different component society members with different specialty divisions, online **lay fora** on the topics regarding Telemedicine, Cervical Cancer, Exercises: During Covid19 Pandemic, Breastfeeding, Thyroid Cancer, Sleep Disorders, Biomedical Waste Management in the COVID19 Pandemic and other various topics of interest in the field of medicine. **Media Forum** on COVID19 Vaccine has been conducted wherein the discussion of the protocol on the development, testing and approval of COVID19 was further discussed by the speakers coming from a representative of the Department of Health, Food & Drug Authority, Vaccine Clinical Trialist and a Professor of Pediatrics. Other activities was also initiated simultaneously by the different PMA Component Societies in the entire country which includes, tree planting, vaccination, Physician’s Night, physical fitness activities, gift giving, distribution of PPE’s, surgical masks, face shields, alcohol, sanitizers etc., blood letting and the giving of tribute to all the Frontliners who are helping in the battle field against COVID19.
3. Virtual regional assemblies have already been lined up and planned to continue to provide CPD units for our members despite the challenge in physical gathering.

And we will also facilitate Leadership Conference for the new set of National Officers, Board of Governors and Officers of the Component Societies and Specialty Societies.

With this thrust of the Association, programs were developed to guide the national leadership and all officers of all the component societies and associations under the PMA to work together to achieve the common goal of making our respective associations relevant and important to all our members.

As a profession, our main priority is our patients whom we have sworn to serve; but as leaders of our associations, our main priority is to take care of our members and safeguard their interests with a sense of justice and fairness. At the same time, make them proud again as Filipino physicians who are regarded with high esteem in our respective areas of responsibility.

COUNTERMEASURES AGAINST COVID-19

The Philippine Medical Association has been donating Personal Protective Equipment, which includes KN95 masks, surgical masks, face shields, goggles, shoe cover, head cover, and isolation gown or coverall suits to our Component Societies across the country, since the beginning of the pandemic. We continue to receive both cash and in-kind donations from the different foundations/organizations, both medical and non-medical.

The Quezon City local government has partnered with the Philippine Medical Association (PMA) and Vireo Loadworks for the activation of “BantAI COVID”, an artificial intelligence (AI)-based free SMS platform for all residents for COVID-19

contact tracing, triaging, telemedicine and referral to hospitals and quarantine facilities.

Developed by Vireo Loadworks Inc., the SMS platform utilizes AI and text messaging through mobile phones to boost efforts in contact tracing and daily monitoring of symptoms for all in-home quarantined suspected and probable COVID-19 cases.

Under the system, close contacts of confirmed COVID-19 patients, who test positive with Rt-PCR test at the community-based testing center (CBT), are enrolled in BantAI COVID by the City Epidemiology and Disease Surveillance (CESU).

Enrollees receive regular text messages reminding them of social distancing, hand washing and personal protection. The platform also has an interactive question and answer function, eliminating the need for face-to-face interviews with close contacts.

The PMA has also started the Free Telemedicine or Teleconsultation to cater to patients who cannot be accommodated in the clinics and hospitals during the pandemic. Telemedicine helps to increase access to healthcare, reduce healthcare costs, and lessen the risk of exposure of patients to the corona virus.

A Covid-19 Compendium of guidelines regarding the new normal in the different medical institutions has been collated from the specialty divisions and societies and published for the use of the medical societies under the banner of the PMA.

The current CPD programs and scientific lectures are all Covid-related or aligned, to further increase knowledge and awareness and prevent the spread of the virus.

The PMA promotes the importance of strengthening one's immune system and of getting flu and pneumococcal vaccines to reduce the risk of flu illnesses.

The National Officers and Board of Governors continue to attend meetings and collaborate with both private organizations and government agencies as regards the Covid-19 advocacies and programs.