

## Myanmar Medical Association (MMA)

### Country Profile

Myanmar Medical Association MMA was established in 1949. It is the only professional medical association, which is a non-profit and independent organization. There are more than 16,000 life time members. It has 14 branches representing all 14 State and Regions and one Branch in Naypyitaw (Capital), Union Region. There are also 44 Specialty Societies, 5 Special Interest Groups and 4 Social support groups.

There are 20 Executive Members which, together with 30 Representatives from State and Region branch associations form the Central Executive Committee. All EC members are elected biennially, through an election where all members can vote in a secret ballot.

The vision of MMA is to be instrumental in promoting the health of the people by enhancing the professionalism of the members and the mission is working together, sharing responsibility and experience with strong commitment towards quality health care in Myanmar. To promote the advancement of Medical Science.

The objectives of MMA are

1. To promote continuing medical education and medical research among Medical Professionals.
2. To support the promotion of health along with the national health care Programs/Plans.
3. To promote cooperation and foster a fraternal spirit among its members.
4. To safeguard the honor and dignity of the medical profession.
5. To maintain a high ethical standard among the medical professionals

MMA is also a member of many international medical associations viz MASEAN, CMAOO and WMA.

The regular activities of MMA include convening yearly, the main Myanmar Medical Conference. The 66th Myanmar Medical Conference was held between 18th and 23rd January 2020. It was attended by more than 1000 participants. The opening ceremony was attended by the Minister of Health and it included some 50 sessions that included plenary sessions, scientific symposia, scientific paper reading and poster presentations. Invited guests include Medical Association members of Thailand, India and China and representatives from CMAOO.

Because of the Covid pandemic many regional medical conferences had to be postponed. But more than 100 online symposia, panel discussions and scientific talks were held by main MMA and many of its' sister societies. While many topics were covered Covid1-9 related topics were the most.

MMA is also involved in the national response to Covid 19. Since the last week of January MMA has conducted many public health talks educating the non-medical community about covid -19, mostly online. It has also invited many leading experts from the Ministry of Health, International Speakers and linked with members of other national medical association to conduct regular knowledge sharing sessions to help its members cope with the pandemic. Senior members of MMA are also actively participating in a technical advisory role in public health measures, treatment and care as well as vaccine policy consultations.

MMA mobilized donations from its members and donated 20 million kyats to the national Covid Fund. It also raised funds, and medical equipments such as PPEs, materials used in Infection control and medications from domestic and Myanmar diaspora, charity organizations and other local and international organizations to be used at various health facilities. MMA also mobilized more than 40,000 USD in coordination with Access to Health Fund for training of volunteer medical Drs.

Because response to Covid 19 required mobilization of large numbers of health care workers, and this in turn caused shortage of HCWs, MMA recruited more than 400 volunteer Drs to help the ministry of health's work. About 70 volunteers are Drs working in Covid Care Centers, more than 250 Drs are working in community fever clinics. Some 70 GP Drs formed a group, that runs a free tele-consultation service for non-Covid-19 medical problems - since people found it difficult to assess their regular GPs. Another group of about 58 Drs are providing what is being called MMA CCC (Community Covid Counselling). This group is providing service to people with psychosocial problems related to Covid-19. It is a free, telephone based service. Another 20 volunteer Drs are currently working together with Drs from Ministry of Health in a Covid Hot-line (Phone no. 2019).

MMA has provided 7 sessions training for 188 volunteer Drs in PPE hands on skill development, infection control, patients psychosocial support and nasal swab collection. About 200 MMA members from all 14 States and Regions were involved in training of non-medical volunteers - who were recruited to work in Covid related activities. This training was conducted in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Social Welfare.

Many regional branches are also actively working together with local public (government) health officials e.g MMA branches in Mandalay is also running 3-4 community fever clinics and providing training for its GPs and volunteer Drs.

#### Regular activities of MMA

The publishing of the Myanmar Medical Journal is continuing regularly on a quarterly basis. Regular CME activities by respective Specialty Societies are now being conducted virtually. There has been more than 50 within the past 6 months. Monthly MMA EC meetings, CEC meetings and business meetings with Societies- while delayed in April and May (during the first wave of Covid) are now being conducted regularly - online. MMA will also convene its annual meeting virtually this January.

#### Future Activities

MMA will continue its core activities - while adapting to new normal. The 67th Myanmar Medical Conference will be held from 23rd to 25th January 2020 - on a virtual platform. It will include plenary sessions, symposia and scientific paper reading and poster presentations as usual. All members are also invited to attend this most important event - online.