

HIGHLIGHTS

From the Honorary Secretary

Report by Dr Lim Kheng Choon

COVID-19 outbreak response

With the escalating novel coronavirus COVID-19 (formerly 2019-nCoV) situation in late January 2020, SMA and the College of Family Physicians Singapore (CFPS) coordinated with the Ministry of Health (MOH) to release their N95 stockpile for sale to doctors. The secretariat staff worked hard to organise the first sale of N95 masks on 24 January 2020, the eve of Lunar New Year. Subsequent sales of N95 masks were organised on 28 and 29 January to meet demands. Surgical masks were also offered for sale to clinics on 29 January to alleviate the shortage they were facing.

SMA would like to thank the staff from MOH and CFPS for their help in coordinating the sale at such a short notice.

A Joint SMA-CFPS Circular regarding 2019 Novel Coronavirus was issued to Members on 27 January 2020, highlighting the process for handling suspect cases, the need to stock up on personal protective equipment, and misinformation circulating on social media.

SMA also contributed through various means of media, including a letter in the *Straits Times Forum* published on 29 January 2020, titled "Medical profession more prepared for outbreaks after Sars experience", and input to the *TODAY* article on COVID-19, titled "The Big Read: 17 years on, S'pore puts SARS lessons to the test in fight against Wuhan coronavirus". Additionally, we also published an *SMA e-News* on 3 February 2020 titled "Updates in view of the 2019-nCoV".

To read the above-mentioned documents or to find out more about SMA's efforts, please visit <https://sma.org.sg/covid19>.

2020 AGM

The SMA's upcoming Annual General Meeting (AGM) has been confirmed as detailed below. Do mark your calendars and join us for the afternoon.

Date: 19 April 2020, Sunday

Time: 2 pm to 4 pm
(Lunch served from 1 pm onwards)

Venue: 2985 Jalan Bukit Merah, SMF Building, Singapore 159457 (meeting room details to be confirmed)

Map: <https://goo.gl/maps/K7Wz4QGWU192>

Please send an email to szeyong@sma.org.sg if you wish to:

1. Confirm your attendance (for both the AGM and lunch);
2. Submit resolutions and/or proposed constitution amendments; or
3. Submit nominations to fill the ten vacancies in the SMA Council.

Members who wish to move any resolution or raise amendments to the Constitution and Rules at the AGM, are to give notice in writing to the Honorary Secretary, by 12 noon on 20 March 2020, in accordance with SMA constitution Article X, section 1, sub-section (iii) and Article XII, section 2, respectively.

Members are invited to submit nominations of candidates to fill the ten vacancies in the Council, in accordance with Article VIII Section 3a of the SMA Constitution.

Nominations must be signed by two Ordinary/Life/Spouse Members and contain a consent to act, if elected, signed by the person nominated.

All completed forms should reach us by 12 noon on 20 March 2020.

Dr Lim is the Honorary Secretary of the 60th SMA Council. He is currently a consultant at Singapore General Hospital.



HSA requirement for two separately drawn blood samples for pre-transfusion testing

As of 1 January 2020, the Health Sciences Authority (HSA) now requires doctors of private hospitals and clinics who use their pre-transfusion cross-match service to provide two separately drawn blood samples. SMA has clarified with HSA on the rationale for the above decision.

The requirement was instituted to reduce "Wrong Blood in Tube" errors which can potentially lead to devastating outcomes. HSA has assessed this measure to be useful for the safety of patients here. It is also in line with recommended international best practices and guidelines. Details of HSA's clarification, as well as a Frequently Asked Questions section, are available on the SMA website using your membership login details, at <http://bit.ly/2uOLnZn>.

Facilities that are not yet ready to implement this requirement can contact HSA Blood Services Group Crossmatch Laboratory to request for an extension of the deadline. ♦