



# GMOA

ESTABLISHED IN  
1926  
TU No. 291

**THE GOVERNMENT MEDICAL OFFICERS' ASSOCIATION**

No.275/75, Professional Centre, Prof. Stanley Wijesundara Mawatha, Colombo 07

Tel : 2580886 / 2055415 / 0718552552

Fax : 4518668 / 2503586

Web : www.gmoa.lk

Email : info@gmoa.lk

office@gmoa.lk

GMOA/MOH/2021/0033

26.08.2021

Hon. Keheliya Rambukwella,  
Minister of Health,  
Ministry of Health,  
Colombo

Dear Sir,

### **Strategies to control current COVID-19 Pandemic**

Being a responsible trade union and a professional organisation, throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, GMOA provided scientifically formulated guidance to the government and ministry of health. We have forwarded six comprehensive reports since the first wave that showed the way for optimum management of the pandemic while maintaining the economy and day to day living under "new normalcy". The strategies we advocated were evidence based and most of the countries that managed to control the pandemic satisfactorily have strictly adhered to similar principals that GMOA has elaborated in our aforementioned reports.

As you are well aware, Sri Lanka has been well appreciated internationally as a role model for successful and effective vaccination programmes with our preventive health services on par with the best.

However, it was evident that COVID-19 vaccination program being the biggest challenge of our time, was not focused on its prime objectives. Therefore, GMOA playing a responsible advocacy roll developed a vaccination strategy by consulting all experts and stakeholders with an objective to achieve the target of reducing deaths by 90%, reducing the health burden of the country and reopening the country by fully vaccinating categories mentioned below when 10 million vaccine doses are available in the country.

- 1) All above 60yrs of age.
- 2) Public with non-communicable diseases below 60yrs age.
- 3) Economically vital fractions of the community.

But it was unfortunate that Dr Samitha Ginige and Dr Deepa Gamage of the Epidemiology Unit, intervened to change the said strategy and included the age group of 30-60 years into the priority group. GMOA pointed out that this irrational decision will derange the entire vaccination campaign and His Excellency the President fully endorsed our strategy.

As a result of the failure to prioritise vaccination, although 2 million doses of vaccines have been administered, still the above imperative groups have not been fully vaccinated. Hence the COVID 19 death rate has escalated. Recent comments by the Head of NOCPKO,

General Shavendra Silva, that 88% of deaths of the country are of above 60yrs old unimmunized people, further validated the GMOA vaccination strategy.

In a view of expediting the vaccination effort, GMOA suggested a mechanism to enrol the government hospital network into the program in addition to the MOH network. Neglecting the said mechanism, Epidemiology Unit imposed various restrictions for the requests by government healthcare institutions while vaccines were freely issued without any such restrictions to the armed forces.

This senseless decision resulted in large crowds gathering into one place while government hospitals and other public healthcare institutions are located well within the vicinity. It was unfortunate that inviting all vaccine candidates to one place resulted in a cosmic financial loss and added another burden to the issue by creating a breeding and spreading ground for the highly virulent Delta variant.

Considering the present crisis situation government was compelled to impose a national lockdown and if the same situation continues, repeated lock downs will be inevitable in future, which will be detrimental to the country's economy.

As an espouse to management of the prevailing crisis, GMOA requests to implement the following immediate measures.

- 1) Direct Epidemiology unit to publish statistics of vaccination status of above 60-year population in each MOH area.
- 2) Enlighten general public, regarding the importance of fully vaccinating everyone above 60yrs old as well as those with NCDs and request assistance to accomplish the matter.
- 3) Replace the current "ringing tone of telephone calls, accentuating the significance of fully vaccinating the category of above 60yrs.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully



Dr. Senal Fernando

Secretary

Cc : Secretary, Ministry of Health  
Director General of Health Services  
Deputy Director General – (PHS-I)  
Deputy Director General – (PHS-II)  
Acting Director, Epidemiology Unit