Distinguished personalities, invited guests, members of media, brothers and sisters in IMA and dear family members,

It’s a huge privilege for a grass root worker like me, to be elevated as the President of the most dynamic state branch of this historic organisation, Indian Medical Association, the largest scientific NGO in the world, devoted to upholding esteem of medical profession and care of the society. At this majestic conference at Thiruvananthapuram, its my proud honour to deliver the Presidential oration as the 57th President of Indian Medical Association, Kerala state branch, that too in front of this galaxy of distinguished personalities and the valiant army of the front line leaders of IMA, to whom I too belong.

The mind is everything. What you think you become. –Buddha It had been our dream, to have this most noble profession on earth, dedicate every bit of its might to ensure scientific and compassionate care to the society. Ladies and gentle men, it would be my earnest attempt to keep both the profession and the people in mind in all our deeds.

Gone are the days, some lament, when doctors used to live in the hearts of people and command their love, affection and respect. We disagree. From the umpteen inputs which I could gather during my exercise in collecting ideas for framing the policy of IMA, both from medical men and community, I could feel the passion and empathy of the medical fraternity and the love and affection of the society. My job is just to form that bridge, to amply portray the mutual goodwill. None of the words spoken here are my own. I am simply echoing the voice of the esteemed members of this association who came up with these ideas in the policy poll held through out the state. I thank all of you for the valuable inputs.

Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter. –Martin Luther King Jr. Ethics do matter and will definitely come first. Ethics committees will be decentralised to reach every branch so that it gets known and becomes active to cater to all the citizens of the state. Ethical adherence will be implemented through channelising the tremendous good will of the medical community. Community help desk and grievance redressal forum will be established in all districts, comprising of eminent citizens and medical leaders. Though the treatment cost is primarily determined by policy makers and the industry, what ever containment becomes possible from the medical fraternity will be ensured through rational prescriptions and investigations. We will eradicate commissions and kick backs, will ensure transparency of medical care and patient's confidentiality. Policy document on patient rights, citizens health charter and formulary for radical prescription will be published.
“Give the ones you love wings to fly, roots to come back and reasons to stay.” Dali Lama

We really value social relation. Citizen advisory panel will be constituted at state, district and branch level comprising of social leaders, prominent citizens and people’s representatives. Their opinion will be sought in matters of care delivery and public health. I would urge all hospitals also to consider establishing such bodies. Family doctor concept will be actively promoted.

Quality of Medical care, would receive top priority. Quality assurance committee would be created. Effective documentation, developing soft skills such as communication and positive attitude and random auditing of medical documents and prescriptions would be promoted. Basic and advanced life support training for medics and paramedics will be carried out. Agency for setting standards and facilitating accreditation of health care facilities will be established. IMA institute will conduct courses for medics and paramedics on various subjects. System to ensure quality of drugs will be initiated. Efforts will be made to publish treatment guidelines in consultation with speciality organisations. Medical education policy is an urgent need of the hour. A white paper on medical education in the state defining the need and standards to be adopted will be published.

"Not everything that can be counted counts, and not everything that counts can be counted. It has become appallingly obvious that our technology has exceeded our humanity.” Albert Einstein

Technology will not be allowed to overshadow human values in medical care. Community service will be the key area for the coming year. The theme subject for community intervention will be cancer awareness and screening. A specific programme Citizens Health Empowerment Campaign, Kerala (check) is being launched for this purpose. Effective interventions to combat communicable and non communicable diseases, and alcohol and substance abuse will also be in place. Life support training to police, taxi, auto drivers, ensuring child health and safety, programmes for differently abled, mental health initiatives, care of elderly and palliative services are the other specific interventions planned. Each branch should adopt a school and a village in their area for promotion of health interventions and education. An elaborate programme will be established for health policy empowerment of peoples representatives and local self government at state and branch level. IMA will strongly intervene in issues of public safety like road safety and environmental pollution. The National Initiative for Safe Sound (NISS) will be actively implemented in the state. A special project to promote organ donation will also be set up. A food policy would be drawn up and measures to ensure food safety will be implemented.
IMA would seek Government’s help for providing environment for safe Medical practice and adequate public health. Government has to provide better placement for meritorious doctors, give priority to common PSC entrance and establish medical service recruitment board. IMA should get representation in Hospital development committees. Private sector should also be actively involved in Government’s health care programmes and Public Private partnership should be promoted. Policy towards sharing medical facility between Government and private institutions should be implemented rather than increasing investment on duplicating investigation and treatment facilities. Government should support private hospitals with aids and rebates on taxes and get free treatment for poor patients in return. It’s extremely disheartening to note that Doctors are being framed with criminal charges for matters arising out of medical practice. There should be effective legislation to prevent this. We have to also ponder on whether we need a clinical establishment act in this state which has a proven medical record vouched by our excellent health indices. Though the Hospital protection bill is enacted, effective implementation is overdue. Encroachment into modern medicine by other systems and widespread quackery too have to be contained. IMA feels that mono faculty Medical University is required for due patronage and development of Modern medical faculty in the state.

Whether you think you can or you think you can’t, you’re right. –Henry Ford Doctors who think ‘they can’ are naturally in IMA and are determined to achieve. We aim to reach Nammude arogyam, the most credible and reliable health magazine of the state, published by IMA, to every Malayali. Needless to say that all our members should subscribe to the magazine and all schemes should promote Nammude Arogyam. IMA will start a mass communication wing for publishing articles on disease control and life style and circulate through print and internet. Media cell will be constituted which will ensure our presence on health matters in print, audio and visual media as well as maintain good liaison with media houses and personnel. IMA will have a strong presence online. The website would be made fully functional and will enable members to do all transaction and access information online. Effective use of social media will also be ensured.

Great emphasis would be given for academic programmes, research and scientific publications. KMJ will be highly patronised. I request the schemes to ear mark fund to facilitate research especially in public health. IMA will compile quality data to enable planning and implementation of Public health activities.
IMA will champion the cause of professional solidarity. We greatly value the activities of KGMOA, KGMCTA, KGIMOA, QPMPA and all other organisations championing the cause of Modern medicine. An apex medical council with representation of all modern medical organisations will be established. An academic consortium with participation of all academic bodies is also being planned. We will develop tie up with AKMG and other organisations for effective utilisation of the talents and commitment of the medical community who have settled abroad. Hospitals in private sector are facing innumerable hardships. The Hospital board of India will be ably supported to solve these. Doctors working in private sector too face lot of problems. A committee will be established to effectively intervene to ensure job security and adequate working conditions for Doctors in Private sector. Subcommittees for Government sector, medical education and private medical teachers will also be established for strong liaison with respective organisations to provide effective support to their causes. IMA salute the dedication and commitment of our paramedical workers, especially nurses, lab technicians and pharmacists and will do every thing possible to protect their interests and improve their scientific capabilities.

IMA’s strength definitely lies in its membership. The huge patronage we receive from all quarters is undoubtedly due to our enormous membership strength being the parent body of more than twenty seven thousand doctors. This year we would target to enrol all modern medicine Doctors in the state as members of IMA. A highly professional body will be set up to achieve this ambitious target.

We are so very proud of our schemes. It will be the earnest endeavor of my team to ensure smooth functioning of all our schemes in IMA.

World over many young leaders are emerging not only in organisations but also to head states and nations. We too will not be found wanting to encourage our youngsters to take up the mantle of the profession and association. Student IMA and young doctors will be especially patronised. We are equally determined to empower our women leaders too. The future of IMA and the profession, I’m sure, will be safe in your hands.

"Nothing is permanent in this wicked world - not even our troubles."
Charlie Chaplin  As Doctors often we are over worked and also over burdened with umpteen other responsibilities. We have to ease out our stress. A film club, literary club and lot of sports and cultural activities are in store. Do await IMA picnics and formation of ‘Family circle’, a gang of great friends of IMA statewide. IMA KTDC venture - ‘God’s own offer’ is also taking shape. Our members and families should maintain good health and live long productive years. A special programme aimed at Doctors and family member’s health is also being contemplated.
We are fortunate to have so many great leaders. I wholeheartedly congratulate all those who have won the elections. Now our job is to shape a better profession, with single-minded dedication. The State executive board comprising of the President, Immediate past president, Vice Presidents, Secretary, Joint secretaries and Treasurer will be in charge of formulating and implementing our policies for this year. The vice presidents and joint secretaries will be allotted portfolios to effectively implement various activities planned. They will represent the state in all regional programmes.

Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things that you didn’t do than by the ones you did do, so throw off the bowlines, sail away from safe harbor, catch the trade winds in your sails. Explore, Dream, Discover. –Mark Twain Friends, you gave all these ideas. You have dreamt of each one of these projects.

I am really confident of this great army of thirty thousand valiant men, who have silently toiled all these years to ensure a better profession and due public care. Please allow me, as your President to dream big. Such is my confidence in you that at the end of this year I am sure we would not only have achieved most of these but also surpass many. I need all of you in the team, with your characteristic charisma. I owe a lot to all of you out there, who allowed me to dream, to speak and to lead. No words can express my feelings, my sincere sentiments to each one of you. I am so very grateful. A big thank you. And to my branch and this great organising team, I just want to say that this life time is not enough for me to repay.

Be kind whenever possible. It is always possible– Dalai Lama. Please allow me to share a big dream, the ‘Patient care fund’. We will compile a sum through donations primarily from the medical sector, small and big, to create a fund which would be made available to our patients in times of need. A little solace, to those who rely on us, so that we don’t turn them away the next time when they say they can’t afford a drug or a bed. I appeal to all good men to generously contribute, all schemes to patronise and all corporates to aid this noble venture. Together let us show that we care.

With your blessings and permission I declare the motto for this year ‘for the profession, for the people’

“In a gentle way, you can shake the world.” Mahatma Gandhi Come, let’s earnestly attempt.

JAI HIND, JAI IMA
Dr Sreejith N Kumar
President, IMA Kerala