

2012

# Establishment of 'Specialist registry' & Introduction of an evaluation procedure for foreign medical specialists



Government Medical  
Officers Association



Ministry of Health  
Sri Lanka



# Establishment of a ‘Specialist registry’ & Introduction of an Evaluation Procedure for Foreign Medical Specialists

*“Procedure to ensure safe medical care”*



Government Medical  
Officers' Association



Ministry of Health

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## Preface

Sri Lanka's health service is undoubtedly the leading healthcare provision of South Asia, with its' health care indices and qualitative standards in par with the rest of the developed world.

Government sector hospitals provide free healthcare to the mass of the nation. Health care providers are supervised by proficient Government Specialists who have undergone a stringent training program, both local and foreign, and finally 'Board certified ' after qualitative assessments by the Post Graduate Institute of Medicine.

The Private health care sector was subsequently established as an ally to the Government sector to meet increasing health demands. Specialist care was then provided by Government specialists, who engage in private practice outside their normal duty hours.

In the Post war era Sri Lanka's private health sector is undergoing a tremendous expansion. Health care has emerged not simply as a service, but projected more as a lucrative investment. With many new investors entering the private health care market and existing institution branching out, the ever increasing competition amongst them demands that specialist care is provided round the clock. As a consequence foreign specialists are recruited to fill the void thus created.

However, the current medical ordinance doesn't allow adequate provision for the regulation of foreign specialists and for proper scrutiny of their work experience or their qualifications. The existing registration process has come under heavy criticism owing to its poor standards, arbitrary and ad-hoc decision making, and its' lack of transparency.

Temporary registrations are issued haphazardly for indefinite periods. The lack of a 'Specialist Registry', has resulted in the influx of substandard doctors working in the capacity of specialists, threatening the standards and quality of health care delivery.

In the background of the implementation of CEPA and SATIS, the establishment of a 'Specialist Registry' and an effective evaluation procedure for foreign medical specialists has gained even greater importance to ensure safe medical practice in Sri Lanka.

Today is in an era where nations are striving towards enhancing the quality of health care provision. Health tourism is emerging as a major force of the economy. We as the GMOA are pioneering policy changes and conceptual improvements that will enable Health care of Sri Lanka to emerge as a forefront of health care provision in the world.

This booklet is an attempt to create awareness and enlighten the medical fraternity on the efforts taken towards establishment of a ‘Specialist Registry’ and Introduction of an Evaluation Procedure for Foreign Medical Specialists ; “A procedure to ensure safe medical care”.

## **Editorial board**

## **Message from GMOA**

The Ministry of Health has a responsibility towards maintaining standards of health care in both the public and private sector. Provision of Specialist care to the Sri Lankan community is a very important entity of our healthcare system.

There has been a recent influx of foreign medical specialists to Sri Lanka due to the development of the private health care sector in the post war era. The issues regarding the employment of foreign medical professionals in Sri Lanka, are mainly attributed to the absence of a specialist registry and the lack of provision in the medical ordinance to strictly regulate such foreign specialists. Indeed this is a very important issue needing our urgent attention.

The constructive approach taken by the GMOA to point out this issue and the manner in they have worked to achieve a collective consensus between all professional bodies and relevant stakeholders towards finding a lasting solution is exemplary and must be commended.

We are happy to be involved in this pioneering effort towards establishing a ‘Specialist Registry’ and a proper evaluation procedure for foreign medical professionals to ensure a safe specialist care for the Sri Lankan community. We hope this process will be established soon to safeguard the rights of both doctors and patients

**Dr. Anuruddha Padeniya**

**President, Government Medical Officers’ Association**

**11/9/2012**

## **Message from the Secretary, Ministry of Health**

The Ministry of Health has a responsibility towards maintaining standards of health care in both the public and private sector. Provision of Specialist care to the Sri Lankan community is a very important entity of our healthcare system.

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We are happy to be involved in this pioneering effort towards establishing a ‘Specialist Registry’ and a proper evaluation procedure for foreign medical professionals to ensure a safe specialist care for the Sri Lankan community. We hope this process will be established soon to safeguard the rights of both doctors and patients.

**Dr. T. R. C. Ruberu**

**Secretary,**

**Ministry of Health.**

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## Executive Summary

The employment of **substandard** medical practitioners in the capacity of ‘Specialists’ and ‘Assistant Specialists’ in the private healthcare sector, has led to many litigations and misconducts in the recent past. The absence of a **clear policy** on the employment of foreign specialists, together with the lack of a **„Specialist registry’** in Sri Lanka has resulted in many unqualified doctors practicing as ‘specialists’ in private hospitals, violating patient safety and rights of qualified consultants.

The issue of foreign doctors, without due qualifications practicing as specialists in the private sector was first brought to attention by the ‘Association of Cardiothoracic Surgeons and Anesthesiologists of Sri Lanka’ (ACSAS)(Annexure 1). Many patients who had received medical care under them have been subsequently transferred to government hospitals with post-surgical complications. After due consideration of information regarding this issue, the GMOA initiated the pioneering process and took authority to prevent such events in future and to ensure safe medical care.

Though provision is provided by the section 67A of the Medical Ordinance for the registration of foreign specialists, there is no clear policy or a methodical evaluation process to assess their qualifications and skill levels. The issue has been further confounded by the lack of a **specialist registry** in Sri Lanka, resulting in many unqualified doctors practicing as specialists in private hospitals, violating both the rights qualified consultants and safety of patients. The existing registration process too has come under heavy criticism owing to its poor standards, arbitrary and ad-hoc decision making and its’ lack of transparency.

GMOA took the initiative by discussing this issue with the Ministry of Health (Annexure 2,3). The Secretary of Health after due consideration of the issue appointed a committee under the chairmanship of the DGHS (Annexure 4). The GMOA organized a workshop on 18/11/2011 with the participation of all stakeholders to discuss this issue (Annexure 5). Their perspectives were shared and their opinions sought towards developing policy for a long lasting solution.

A brainstorming session was conducted and **consensus** was arrived among all stakeholders with the eventual objectives of,

1. Establishing a ‘Specialist Registry’ in the SLMC by incorporating it into the Medical Ordinance.
2. Establishing a draft policy document for the registration of foreign medical professionals in Sri Lanka.

At the end of this brainstorming session it was concluded that a report (Annexure 6), with the draft proposals, should be circulated among all professional organizations and to obtain their feedback. All professional colleges were requested to provide a feedback by identifying the specialties under their purview and to recognize the qualifications to be included in the specialist registry (Annexure 7).

The majority of professional organizations responded positively and corrections were made accordingly. It was unanimously agreed that this is an urgent necessity for the country especially in the background of the implementation of Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) and SAARC Agreement on Trade in Services (SATIS).

The final ‘consensus’ workshop was held on 10/05/2012 at the Health Ministry Auditorium (Annexure 8). The workshop was chaired by the DGHS with the objectives of

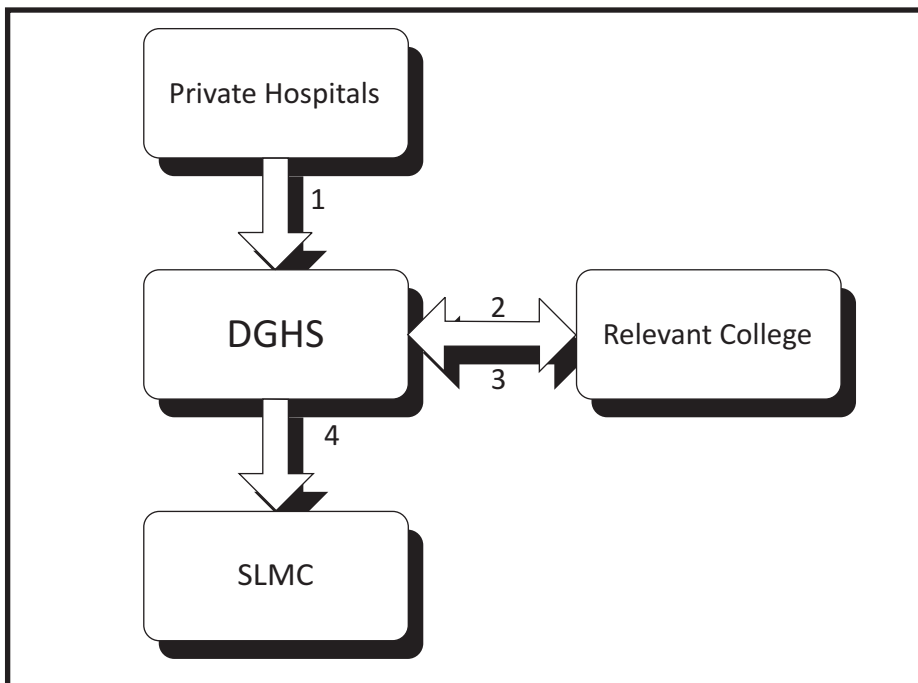
1. Acknowledgement of ‘specialist’ qualifications presented by the respective colleges and professional bodies.
2. Formation of Specialist Registry and its inclusion criteria.
3. Discussion and finalizing of the draft proposal for registration of foreign specialists

Decisions reached at the workshop are now in the pipeline towards the process of implementation. (Annexure 9)

# **Introduction of an Evaluation Procedure for Foreign Medical Specialists**

## Existing procedure for recruitment of foreign medical professionals to the private sector

- Foreign medical specialists are registered under the provision provided by the section 67A of Medical Ordinance.
- The applicant should submit his/her CV along with supporting documents, and a letter of sponsorship by the prospective local employer to the DGHS.
- The DGHS will submit the credentials of the applicant to the relevant college for evaluation and obtain their recommendations to register the applicant as a specialist in Sri Lanka.
- **Alternatively**, according to Section 67A the DGHS has the **sole authority** to appoint a committee to evaluate the application form and give its recommendations without the concurrence of the relevant professional body.
- Other than DGHS, the Secretary of Health or a Dean of a medical faculty can recommend the SLMC regarding the suitability of the applicant to function as a specialist.



## Sequence of Events taken to develop the proposed Procedure to Evaluate Foreign Doctors

<b>2009</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Association of Cardiothoracic surgeons (ACS) raised the issue of substandard foreign doctors.</li> <li>• GMOA or other authorities did not take action</li> </ul>
<b>July 2011</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Current executive committee of GMOA brought to the notice of secretary/ health</li> </ul>
<b>August 2011</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Upon GMOA request, a committee appointed (DGHS as the chairman)</li> <li>• Committee prepared a drafted evaluation procedure</li> </ul>
<b>18th November 2011</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GMOA organized a brain storming workshop with SLMC, SLMA, all professional Colleagues and Ministry officials</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GMOA obtained observations and feedback from professional colleges</li> </ul>
<b>10th May 2012</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GMOA organized a Workshop to reach final consensus of all stakeholders</li> <li>• Finalized a policy document</li> </ul>
<b>May 2012</b>	<b>Implementation of new procedure by Department of Health</b>

# Section 67A of the Medical Ordinance



## Medical Ordinance (Chapter 105) Section 67 A

### PART X SUPPLEMENTARY

67A. (1) Notwithstanding anything in any other provision of this Ordinance, any person who is not a citizen of Sri Lanka or not a person who is ordinary resident in Sri Lanka, and who is not qualified to be registered under this Ordinance as a medical practitioner, dentist or nurse, may apply in writing to the Medical Council to be registered as a specialist medical practitioner or a specialist dental surgeon or as a nurse for a period not exceeding one year, if -

a) he produces a "certificate of good standing" from the relevant Authority of the Country of his last practice in medicine, dentistry or nursing to the effect that he possesses sufficient qualification, knowledge and skills to efficiently practice as a specialist medical practitioner, or a specialist dental surgeon or a nurse; and

b) his application for registration is recommended by the Director General of Health Services or the Dean of a faculty of Medicine or of a Faculty of Dental services, as the case may be, of a university established under the University Act, No 16 of 1978.

(2) The Medical Council may allow such application taking into consideration the needs of the country for such services if it is satisfied that the applicant is qualified to make the application under the preceding provisions of this section

(3) Any registration obtained under this section may be renewed from time to time, but the aggregate period of such registration shall not exceed three years"

"Registration as medical practitioners dentists, or nurses or certain persons not qualified under the preceding provisions of this Ordinance

# **Final Proposals Recommended by all the Stakeholders**

## **FINAL DRAFT PROPOSAL**

The final draft proposal was formulated with the concurrence of the Department of Health, SLMC, GMOA, PGIM including chairmen of all Boards of Studies, all professional colleges and organizations. The Registration of foreign medical specialists is described in two categories.

- Category A - Registration for employment in private sector hospitals.
- Category B - Registration for non-profitable work

### **CATEGORY A : Registration of foreign qualified Specialists for employment in Private sector hospitals (PSH).**

Private sector hospitals (PSH) are an important part of the Sri Lankan Health sector. It is understood that Private Sector Hospitals require an adequate number of specialists to provide good patient care and to maintain their services efficiently in their institutions and specialty centers. However, they sometimes claim that they do not have enough Sri Lankan specialists to work, especially full time, in some specialties to function their institutions efficiently.

Therefore PSH "s are compelled to resort to recruiting full-time foreign specialists to overcome the „dearth " of local specialists in certain specialties.

The following guidelines have been prepared by the Ministry of Health, following submissions and lengthy discussions with all professional Colleges & Associations, the Sri Lanka Medical Council, Association of Medical Specialists and the GMOA.

The objectives of drafting these guidelines are to ensure that:

- 1) PSH's have sufficient specialists in all the disciplines that they require, to maintain the services that they provide, efficiently.
- 2) The general public of Sri Lanka will be served by qualified foreign specialists of good quality.
- 3) The foreign specialists who are employed by the PSH's are qualified specialists whose qualifications have been recognized by the Sri Lanka Medical Council (SLMC).
- 4) The registration process for foreign specialists is made transparent, efficient and streamlined.
- 5) The foreign specialists are employed, **only**, if suitable qualified Sri Lankan specialists are not available, to safeguard the national interests, as in every country.

Therefore, as far as possible PSH should employ Sri Lankan specialists. If foreign specialists are employed, such specialists should have had specialist training and qualifications equivalent to standards set by the Post Graduate Institute of Medicine (PGIM) Sri Lanka and they should have „Specialist Registration “ in the Medical Councils of their relevant countries and should have served as specialists in their own or another country for at least for two (2) years. No registration will be granted to non-specialists.

### **Procedure for recruiting foreign specialists for employment in PSH**

- 1) PSH should advertise for the specialists' posts locally. Prominent advertisements should be placed in three national English newspapers on three (3) separate days, spaced at least two weeks apart. The advertisement should be as specified in *Document A1*. If there are no Sri Lankan applicants, the same advertisement should be advertised in the Internet, International Journals etc. to enable foreign specialists to apply.
- 2) If there are no Sri Lankan applicants, an application to employ a foreign specialist should be submitted to the Director General of Health Services (DGHS) with a processing fee of Rs. 25,000/- per applicant at least three months prior to the proposed employment.
- 3) A statement from PSH that there were no suitable Sri Lankan applicants should be provided with the application, together with proof of advertisement as in *Document A1*.

- 4) The Secretary Health / DGHS will summon a committee to examine the suitability of the candidate for temporary registration at the SLMC. The application will be screened for completeness by the Director PHSD and the committee will give its recommendation within two (2) weeks.

The committee will comprise of the following:-

- Director General of Health Services (Chairman)
- Deputy Director General (Medical Services) I or II / Deputy Director General (Dental Services)
- The Director Post Graduate Institute of Medicine (PGIM) or Deputy Director PGIM
- A nominee of the President, SLMC.
- The President of the relevant College or nominee.
- The Chairman of the relevant Board of Study of PGIM or nominee
- Director, Private Health Sector Development (Secretary of the committee)
- A member from the private sector

Committee members will be paid per sitting. Quorum should be five (5) with representatives from respective Professional College and Board of Study.

- 5) Temporary registration once granted is restricted to practice within the said institution and in that specialty alone.
- 6) Details that should be in the application and the documents that have to be submitted with the application are in *Document A2*.

### **Renewal of registration**

Renewal of registration will not be automatic.

- 1) Applications for renewal of registration by the PSH concerned should be submitted at least 3 months before the expiry of the period of temporary registration, as in *Document A2*.
- 2) Proof that the post has been advertised as specified in *Document A1* should be supplied as well as proof and a statement that no suitable Sri Lankan specialists were found for the post.

- 3) Only two (2) renewals will be permitted, after which the applicant has to obtain local postgraduate qualifications as a private candidate as per the PGIM prospectus.
- 4) A Performance report of the applicant, including
  - a) Work performed
  - b) Any complaints by patients, public or colleagues to the PSH or to the Ministry of Health or to the Sri Lanka Medical Council.
- 5) An applicant who has obtained registration for three (3) years consecutively is not eligible to apply for another within a period of five (5) years.

### **Approval or rejection**

The committee will recommend the approval or rejection of the application to the President SLMC that the applicant could be granted registration or not under section 67A for the post he/she has applied for, for duration of one year

## **DOCUMENTA1**

### **The Specimen Advertisement**

.....Hospital  
Post.....

**Applications are called from Sri Lankan doctors who have the relevant specialist qualifications and have been included in the specialist list of the Sri Lanka Medical Council (SLMC)**

**Age** -Below 60 years

**Salary** -.....(Negotiable)

**Other Benefits** -.....(Negotiable)

**Conditions of Service** -to be described by the PSH in conformity with local labour regulation.

*Please supply details specified in the application form which you should obtain. PSH to advertise at least three (3) times in National English newspapers in the main section on a 5"x7" box.*

## DOCUMENT A2

### **Application For Temporary Registration For Foreign Nationals As Specialists In The Sri Lanka Medical Council .**

Name:

Age:

Sex:

Nationality:

Post applied for:

Name of Private Sector Hospital:

Institution where the First Medical Degree was obtained: \*<sup>1</sup>

Name of and Year in which First Medical Degree was obtained:

Medical Council in which applicant has Registered their First Degree:

Institution from which specialist qualification was obtained:

Specialist qualification:

Duration of specialist training:

Academic record:

Medical Council in which applicant has Registered his/her Specialist Qualification:

Duration of time that the applicant has worked as a specialist in the field he is applying for in the country of registration or any other country as a specialist consultant:

A work audit. ( work performed as specialist consultant):

Employment details should be presented in a tabulated form under the following headings starting with the present position

Employment details should be presented in a tabulated form under the following headings starting with the;

Present position

Institutions, Posts, Designations, Durations

Contact details of supervising officer/Administrative Head of Institution/Employer.

Details of work (work audit) performed in each position in the last 5 years

List of publications and presentations

### **Documents that have to be submitted with the application.**

1. Undergraduate Degree certificate\*
2. Registration certificate from the Medical council of the domiciled country.
3. Certificate of Good Standing from Medical Council of domiciled country.
4. Postgraduate Degree certificates.
5. Certificate recognizing applicant as a specialist by the Medical Council of the relevant country.
6. All contact details to verify information in all the documents.
7. Certificates of work experience from the hospitals that the applicant worked in as a consultant.
8. Letters from two referees with contact details

*\* For approval, the medical school/university should be on the, recognized list of medical schools/universities in the Sri Lanka Medical Council or in the data base of Avicenna or in the FAIMER International Medical Education Directory .*

## **CATEGORY B : Registration of foreign qualified Specialists for Non-Profitable work.**

The services of foreign qualified Specialists can be obtained for the following;

1. Training workshops organized by professional bodies (TWs)
2. Government hospitals (GHs) sponsored by International Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO)
3. Special health camps organized by voluntary organizations (HCs)
4. Clinical research
5. Foreign Postgraduate trainees of the PGIM

The objectives of drafting these recommendations are to ensure that:

1. Foreign specialists have qualifications recognized by the Sri Lanka Medical Council (SLMC).
2. The Sri Lankan general public will be served by foreign specialists of good quality as demonstrated by their service record.
3. The services provided by such foreign specialists are in need for the Sri Lankan general public even if they are done by way of charity or humanitarian basis.

### **1) Training workshops organized by professional bodies (TWs)**

Foreign qualified specialist "s services are obtained as trainers and resource persons in training workshops organized by different health professional bodies in order to develop the capacity of Sri Lankan doctors. This is considered an important component of developing the professional capacity of Sri Lankan doctors, since it provides them with the opportunity to learn modern techniques and to share their experiences with technical experts in different fields.

### **2) Government hospitals (GHs) sponsored by INGO's and NGO's**

Foreign qualified specialists are practicing in some Government Hospitals, especially in the Northern Province, having being employed by International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGO "s) on charity basis. Rarely non-specialist doctors have also been recruited in certain hospitals, in the capacity of doctors who provide emergency care services. This has been recognized and considered 'necessary' in situations of emergencies and in the era when conflicts prevailed in the country. With the resolving

of the conflict situation of the country, an actual need for such services has to be looked into and analyzed carefully and decided on case by case basis.

It is concluded that there is **no** need for foreign non-specialist doctors or General Practitioners for Sri Lanka, thus they will not be given registration under any circumstances.

### **3) Special health camps organized by voluntary organizations (HCs)**

Certain International and National Non-Governmental Organizations (INGO & NGO) also conduct special health camps obtaining services of foreign qualified specialists. Memorandums of Understandings (MOUs) also exist between the Ministry of Health and certain INGO's and NGO's in providing services to the needs communities of in underserved and remote areas in Sri Lanka. Instances of misuse / attempts at misuse of the MOUs; obtaining services from non-specialists and non-qualified persons; problems due to lack of proper follow up; the use of low quality and unregistered drugs have been reported.

Professional bodies and trade unions have expressed their concerns regarding such irregularities and to avoid such situations, in future, to safeguard the health of our citizens.

### **4) Clinical Research**

- No foreign specialists should be allowed to practice in Sri Lanka without temporary registration from Sri Lanka Medical Council.
- No registration will be granted to non-specialists.
- Registration will be granted for a specific period of time and for that specific task only.
- No re-registration will be granted in this situation.
- The sponsoring agency should take sole responsibility of obtaining the required services of foreign specialists and to provide quality, safe and efficient care to the Sri Lankan population.
- The sponsoring agency should work in collaboration with Provincial, Regional and Divisional Health Authorities, where applicable, and requests should be made with their recommendations.
- The foreign specialists should work in close collaboration with relevant Sri Lankan specialists with their guidance and support

- In the case of workshops of specific operational procedures or health camps with surgical interventions, foreign specialists should be present for post-operative follow up and must attend to any possible complications.
- All drugs and devices used in the health camps /operations should be registered products in Sri Lanka.
- No money and any other form of charges should be imposed on the Sri Lankan population for the services that the foreign specialists provide.

### **5) Foreign postgraduate trainees of PGIM**

Foreign specialists required for training workshops organized by the PGIM or other professional colleges, need only a letter of recommendation of the foreign specialist. This letter has to be given by the President/ Secretary of the college or Director PGIM.

### **Procedure for recruiting foreign Specialists for Non-Profitable work**

1. An application to employ a foreign specialist should be submitted to the Director General of Health Services (DGHS) at least two weeks prior to the proposed activity.
2. The *Secretary Health / DGHS* will summon a committee to examine the application after the application has been screened for completeness within two (2) weeks by the Director PHSD. The committee will give its recommendation within two (2) weeks.
  - a. The committee will comprise the following:-
    - i. Director General of Health Services (Chairman)
    - ii. Deputy Director General (Medical Services) I or II
    - iii. /Deputy Director General (Dental Services)
    - iv. The Director PGIM or nominee
    - v. A nominee of the President of the SLMC
    - vi. The President of the relevant College or nominee of the college council
    - vii. The Chairman of the relevant Board of Study of PGIM or nominee
    - viii. Director Private Health Sector Development (D/PHSD)
  - b. Committee members will be paid per sitting.
3. Details that should be in the application are in *Document B1*

### **Approval or rejection**

The committee will make its' recommendation to the President of the SLMC, on whether the applicant can be registered or not, under section 67 A, for the purpose that he / she has applied for, for the specific duration.

## DOCUMENT B1 - Application

Name:.....

Age:.....

Sex:.....

Nationality:.....

Name of State Hospital/Specific Health Camp with location :.....

Institution where the Basic Medical Degree was obtained \*.....

Name of and Year in which Basic Medical Degree was obtained .....

Medical Council in which applicant has Registered their First Degree.....

Institution from which specialist qualification was obtained.....

Specialist qualification.....

Duration of specialist training.....

Academic record

Medical Council in which applicant has Registered his/her Specialist Qualification.....

Duration of time that the applicant has worked as a specialist in the field he is applying for in the country of registration or any other country as a specialist.....

### Documents to be submitted by the applicant

1. Undergraduate Degree certificate
2. Postgraduate Degree certificate
3. Certificate of Good Standing from Medical Council of domiciled country
4. Certificate recognizing applicant as a specialist by the Medical Council of the relevant country
5. Contact details to verify information
6. Recommendation letter from President of relevant professional college in Sri Lanka
7. Recommendation letter from Provincial/Regional/ Divisional Health Authorities in Sri Lanka

*\*For approval, this medical school should be on the recognized list of the SLMC or in the data base of Avicenna or in the FAIMER International Medical Education Directory.*

# **Establishment of a ‘Specialist registry’**

## **Formulation of the Specialist Registry**

Following discussions between the Ministry of Health, GMOA, SLMC, PGIM, all relevant professional colleges and organizations, the house arrived at a consensus regarding the inclusion criteria for the 'Specialist Registry'.

### General Requirements:

1. Citizen of Sri Lanka
2. SLMC Registration as a doctor.
3. Good Standard certificate from the Respective College with credentials.
4. Payment of fees
  - a. Rs. 5,000 for Board certified specialists
  - b. No fee for Board eligible trainers in pre PGIM era.
  - c. Rs. 25,000 for those who process foreign qualifications.

### Qualifications :

1. Granted Board eligibility before 01.01.1980
2. Board certification in a specialty or sub specialty by the relevant PGIM Board of Study.
3. Recognition of foreign qualifications in a specialty or sub specialty by the evaluation committee.

It was agreed upon that,

- The ownership of the Specialist Registry to be with the SLMC.
- The Ministry of Health should not employ Consultants without specialist registration in the respective specialist field in the public sector. ( if there are no registered specialists, the acting consultant post can be given to the most suitable candidate)

An Evaluation committee is to be formed to make recommendations for entry into the Specialist Registry. The committee would comprise of the following.

- Director General of Health Services or nominee
- The Director Post Graduate Institute of Medicine (PGIM) or nominee
- A nominee of the President, SLMC.
- Three representatives from the relevant college
- The Chairman of the relevant Board of Study of PGIM or nominee

## Current situation

Joint letter to minister signed by all the professional colleges.

25<sup>th</sup> July 2012

Hon. Maithreepala Sirisena,  
Minister of Health and Nutrition,  
Ministry of Health and Nutrition,  
Colombo 10.

Hon. Sir,

### **Re: Employment of 'foreign doctors' in Sri Lanka**

Every government is obliged to safeguard the provision of quality health care in an equitable manner to all its citizens, both in the public sector as well as in the private sector.

However, **contrary to other countries**, Sri Lanka **does not** have an acceptable policy on recruiting foreign doctors. Currently foreign doctors get Temporary registration as '**Medical Practitioners**' under the section 67A of the Medical Ordinance. However, private hospitals employ them as 'Assistant specialists', 'Specialists', 'Sub Specialists' and even 'Super Specialists'. This '**Temporary registration**' is **renewed automatically with no revalidation** or cross check, leaving them with an effective permanent registration to practice in Sri Lanka.

Often, **mal-treated patients** by these so-called specialists are transferred to government hospitals with serious complications for rest of the care. This is a **violation of the rights of innocent patients seeking quality health care** in the private sector. The state, no doubt, has a role in ensuring that the patients (its citizens) receive the best of health care, be it in the state sector or the private sector.

Sri Lankan specialists undergo a strict evaluation process under the supervision of the Post Graduate Institute of Medicine, in Sri Lanka. Similarly, Sri Lankans who obtain foreign qualifications and who seek registration in the Sri Lanka Medical Council (SLMC) are thoroughly evaluated in the ERPM examination and internship prior to registration. These regulations have maintained and upheld the high standards of medical professionalism and patient care in Sri Lanka. However, foreign doctors, some even without primary degrees recognized by the SLMC, engage in practice in Sri Lanka as specialists, having bypassed the above mentioned onerous route of registration and recognition. This is a clear discrimination and a **violation of the rights of highly qualified Sri Lankan doctors as well as Sri Lankan patients**.

Sri Lanka maintains very high standards in the medical profession which is recognized internationally and which also is reflected in the health indices that are comparable to those in developed countries. This has been achieved through strict regulation of standards of medical education and professionalism. As such, substandard foreign doctors are a **grave threat to maintaining the high standards of health care** in Sri Lanka.

To address this long overdue issue the Ministry of Health at the request of the GMOA, with contributions from the Sri Lanka Medical Council, Sri Lanka Medical Association, Sri Lanka Dental Association and all the Professional Colleges and Associations, **developed a set of comprehensive and transparent guidelines to evaluate foreign doctors** applying for temporary registration in Sri Lanka. A **Specialist Registry will also be established** in the Sri Lanka Medical Council.

Page 1 of 7

According to the developed policy framework, when foreign doctor requests for temporary registration, evaluation would have to be conducted by a committee consisting of,

1. Director General of Health Services (Chairman)
2. Director/Private hospital development (Convener & Secretary to the committee)
3. President or a nominee of the Sri Lanka Medical Council.
4. Deputy DGHS (Medical Services)
5. Director /PGIM or nominee.
6. Senior experts in the relevant specialty - two from the relevant Board of study/PGIM and two from the relevant Professional college.

As such, any attempt to circumvent this comprehensive and transparent evaluation procedure will be a threat to Health care standards of Sri Lanka and a violation of the rights of the Sri Lankan people and doctors.

Therefore as professional and academic medical associations of Sri Lanka we would like to earnestly request you to give necessary instructions to the relevant authorities to **legalize and adhere to the evaluation procedure** when granting temporary registration to foreign doctors.

Thank you.

Signed by

Government Medical Officers Association  
Sri Lanka Medical Association  
Sri Lanka Dental Association  
Independent Medical Practitioners Association  
Ceylon College of Physicians  
College of Anaesthesiologists of Sri Lanka  
College of Community Physicians of Sri Lanka  
College of Dental Surgeons of Sri Lanka  
College of Dermatologists of Sri Lanka  
College of Forensic Pathologists of Sri Lanka  
College of General Practitioners of Sri Lanka  
College of Haematologists of Sri Lanka  
College of Medical Administrators of Sri Lanka  
College of Microbiologists of Sri Lanka  
College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Sri Lanka  
College of Oncologists of Sri Lanka  
College of Ophthalmologists of Sri Lanka  
College of Otorhinolaryngologists of Sri Lanka

College of Paediatricians of Sri Lanka  
College of Pathologists of Sri Lanka  
College of Psychiatrists of Sri Lanka  
College of Radiologists of Sri Lanka  
College of Surgeons of Sri Lanka  
College of Transfusion Physicians of Sri Lanka  
College of Venereologists of Sri Lanka  
Association of Neurosurgeons  
Association of Pulmonologists of Sri Lanka  
Association of Specialists in Restorative Dentistry  
Association of Sri Lankan Neurologists  
Orthodontic Society of Sri Lanka  
Sri Lanka Association of Gastroenterology  
Sri Lanka Association of Urological Surgeons  
Sri Lanka Association of Cardiothoracic Surgeons  
Sri Lanka Orthopaedic Association  
Sri Lanka Heart Association  
Sri Lanka Sports Medicine Association



<p align="center"><b>ASSOCIATION OF CARDIOTHORACIC SURGEONS &amp; ANAESTHESIOLOGISTS OF SRI LANKA</b></p>	
<p> <b>ACSAS</b></p>	<p>28<sup>th</sup> February 2011.</p>
<p><b>President</b> C. MENDIS FRCA FFCASI</p> <p><b>1st President</b> P.B.A. KARUNARATNE MS FRCGS</p> <p><b>Secretary</b> P.M. RANASINGHE MS FRCGS</p> <p><b>1st Secretary</b> M.C.M. LALITH MS FRCGS</p> <p><b>Treasurer</b> D. K. RANATHUNGE MD FRCA</p> <p><b>Asst. Treasurer</b> D. P.G.A. RANASINGHE MS FRCGS</p>	<p><b>Registrar,</b> Sri Lanka Medical Council, Norris Canal Road, Colombo 10.</p> <p>Dear Sir,</p> <p align="center"><b>Dr. [REDACTED]</b></p> <p>Our association would like to bring to your attention of an unequalled foreign doctor practicing as an independent Consultant anaesthetist at the New Nawaloka Hospital. This case is a classic example how registration is abused when foreign foreign doctor is given registration by the SLMC.</p> <p>On his evaluation of his qualifications, the college of Anaesthetists has not given approval, for him to practice as an <b>independent Consultant anaesthetist</b>.</p> <p>Dr. [REDACTED] who was a junior anaesthetist or "Registrar Anaesthesia" at Durand's hospital on his transfer to the New Nawaloka hospital he has been suddenly <b>promoted</b> to that post of <b>Consultant Anaesthetist</b>.</p> <p>The Sri Lanka Medical Council in it's letter to the medical director, New Nawaloka Hospital, with copies to the DGHS &amp; Dr. Sharma stated that he can <b>only practice cardiac anaesthesia, under supervision</b>. Your letter also categorically states that violates these terms his <b>registration will be cancelled</b>.</p> <p>But Dr. [REDACTED] violates all the instructions given by the SLMC,</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) He anaesthetizes Cardiac surgical patients as an <b>independent consultant cardiac anaesthetist</b> for cardiac surgeries.</li> <li>(2) Works as a <b>independent cardiac intensive care specialist</b> in the cardiac intensive care unit.</li> <li>(3) Works as an <b>independent general anaesthetist</b> for general surgical procedure.</li> </ol> <p>We would like to request the SLMC to hold an <b>immediate inquiry</b> regarding this foreign doctor and take appropriate action.</p>
<p><b>EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE</b></p> <p>Dr. G.A.C. AMARASENA MS FRCGS</p> <p>Dr. P.A. GUNARATNE MS FRCGS</p> <p>Dr. H. PERERA MD FRCA</p> <p>Dr. P.N. RAJAPAKSE MS FRCGS</p> <p>Dr. K. INDIRARATNE MD FRCA</p> <p>Dr. I. WIJEMANNA MS FRCGS</p> <p>Dr. K. GANAKANTHAN MS FRCA</p>	
<p align="center">ACSAS, Dept. of Cardiothoracic Surgery - 2nd 20, Lady Ridgeway Hospital for Children, Colombo 10, Sri Lanka. Tel. 0094 112669335-3 ext 356</p>	

Dr. K. M. LAHIRE MS FRCS Treasurer Dr. K. KANATHUNGE MD FRCA		Secretary, Government Medical Dr. Y. K. M. LAHIRE M.B.B.S. (M.P.S.S.) Consultant Cardiac Surgeon	
Asst. Treasurer Dr. P. G. A. RAMASINGHE MS FRCS			
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE			
Dr. G. A. AMARASENA MS FRCS Dr. P. A. GUINARATNE MS FRCS Dr. H. PERERA MD FRCS Dr. P. N. RAMPAKSE MS FRCS Dr. K. INDIRARATNE MD FRCS Dr. I. WIJEMANNA MS FRCS		Dr. G. A. KARUNARATNE B. SCIENCE (CON. PHYSICS) HIGHER CARDIOTHORACIC SURGEON THE HOSPITAL OF SRI LANKA Dr. G. A. A. RAMASENA MS FRACS FRCS Consultant Cardiothoracic Surgeon THE CARDIOTHORACIC SURGEON THE NATIONAL HOSPITAL OF SRI LANKA COLOMBO 10	
Mr. P. S. Seneviratne Dr. V. P. D. Senarathne M.B.B.S. (M.P.S.S.) (Consult. Anaesthetist) Dr. J. Jayawardene M.B.B.S. (M.P.S.S.) (Consult. Anaesthetist) Dr. A. S. S. Seneviratne M.B.B.S. (M.P.S.S.) (Consult. Anaesthetist) Dr. A. S. S. Seneviratne M.B.B.S. (M.P.S.S.) (Consult. Anaesthetist)			
AGASSI, Dept. of Cardiology - and 20, Lady Ridgeway Rd. Tel. 0024 110853/54/55 Mr. P. S. Seneviratne (Consult. Anaesthetist)			

## Annexure – 2: Minutes of the Meeting with secretary/Ministry of Health

Minutes of the Meeting with the GMOA held on 18/07/2011 at 2.00 p.m. at the Office of the Secretary / Ministry of Health

The meeting was chaired by Dr. Ravindra Ruberu, Secretary / Ministry of Health.

The following officers participated:

- |                             |   |                          |
|-----------------------------|---|--------------------------|
| 1. Dr P G Mahipala          | - | Add Sec (MS)             |
| 2. Dr. U.A. Mendis          | - | DGHS                     |
| 3. Dr. S. Voganathan        | - | DDG(MS)II                |
| 4. Dr. Lal Panapitiya       | - | D/MS                     |
| 5. Dr. R Balasuriya         | - | D/ICS                    |
| 6. Dr A B Padeniya          | - | President/GMOA           |
| 7. Dr K U D Milroy          | - | Treasurer/GMOA           |
| 8. Dr W M P Wannasinghe     | - | Editor/GMOA              |
| 9. Dr S S Marasingha        | - | Assistant Secretary/GMOA |
| 10. Dr Upul Gunasekara      | - | Asst. Secretary/GMOA     |
| 11. Dr Chandika Episakaduwa | - | Secretary/GMOA           |
| 12. Dr Saman Wadanambay     | - | Vice President/GMOA      |
| 13. Dr. I B J Dias          | - | MO/MOH                   |

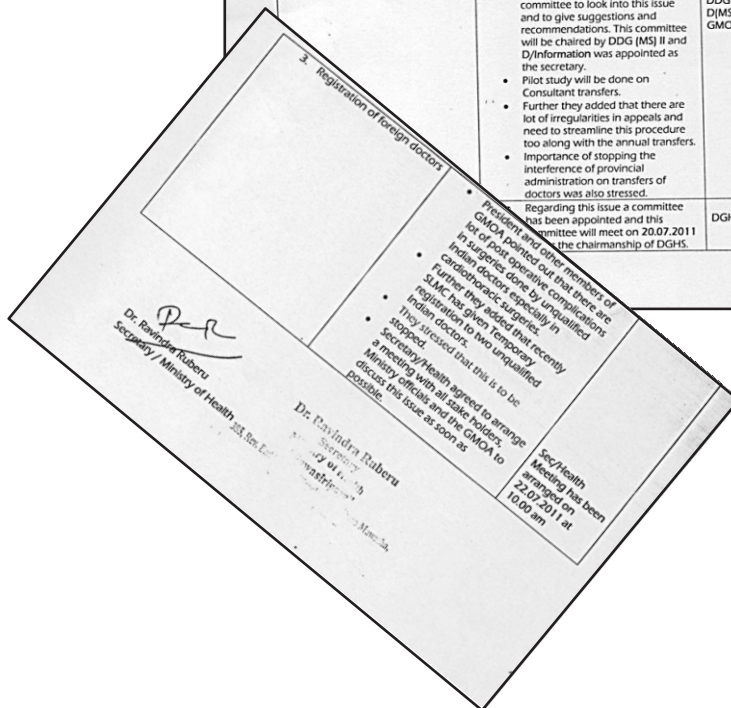
21 JUL 2011

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At the beginning of the meeting Secretary/Health welcomed the newly selected office bearers of GMOA.

Item	Description/Action to be taken	Responsibility
1. Transfers of Grade Medical officers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>President/GMOA pointed out that there are lots of irregularities in transfers of grade medical officers and suggested to have a good computerized system to streamline this procedure.</li> <li>It was decided to appoint a committee to look into this issue and to give suggestions and recommendations. This committee will be chaired by DDG (MS) II and D/Information was appointed as the secretary.</li> <li>Pilot study will be done on Consultant transfers.</li> <li>Further they added that there are lot of irregularities in appeals and need to streamline this procedure too along with the annual transfers.</li> <li>Importance of stopping the interference of provincial administration on transfers of doctors was also stressed.</li> </ul>	DDG (MS) II D/MS GMOA
3. Registration of foreign doctors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regarding this issue a committee has been appointed and this committee will meet on 20.07.2011 under the chairmanship of DGHS.</li> </ul>	DGHS

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## Annexure – 4: Minutes of the Meeting with Secretary / Minister of Health

Minutes of the Meeting regarding registration of foreign doctors held on 25.07.2011 at 12.00 noon at the office of Secretary/Health

This meeting was chaired by the Sec/Health.

Following officers were present at this meeting

- |                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| 1. Dr P G Mahipala        | AddSec(MS)                                       |
| 2. Dr R Wimal Jayantha    | Acting DGHS                                      |
| 3. Dr Samarakoon Piyasena | SAS(MS)  |
| 4. Dr G Panapitiya        | D/MS   |
| 5. Dr R Balasuriya        | D/ICS  |
| 6. Prof. Lalitha Mendis   | President/SLMC                                   |
| 7. Dr M Munasinghe        | Association of Cardiothoracic Surgeons           |
| 8. Dr C Mendis            | President/Association of Cardiothoracic Surgeons |
| 9. Dr K L Fernando        | President/CSSL                                   |
| 10. Dr A B Padeniya       | President/GMOA                                   |
| 11. Dr U M Gunasekara     | GMOA   |
| 12. Dr C Epitakaduwa      | Sec/GMOA   |
| 13. Dr D C Rajapaksha     | GMOA   |
| 14. Dr Saman Wadanamby    | Vice President/GMOA                              |
| 15. Dr Hemantha Perera    | Association of Cardiothoracic Surgeons           |
| 16. Dr Palitha Abeykoon   | SLMA   |
| 17. Dr N J Nons           | Registrar/SLMC                                   |
| 18. Dr I B J Dias         | MO/Sec. Office                                   |

The following issues were discussed

Item	Description /Decision made	Responsibility
1. Registration of foreign doctors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dr Munasinghe, Dr Padeniya and several other participants enlightened the forum regarding the present situation of this issue.</li> <li>Further they added that the SLMC has given registration to unqualified Indian doctors recently while having protests from ACS and GMOA.</li> <li>Dr Munasinghe said that it was agreed by the MoH in one of the Hon. Minister's meeting not to give SLMC registration to foreign doctors other than the fully qualified Consultants who applied adhering to the proper procedure of appointment.</li> <li>Sec/Health pointed out that there is a huge discrepancy in medical ordinance 67A which leads to these kinds of malpractices and need to amend the ordinance.</li> <li>Dr Palitha Abeykoon/SLMA said that 67A in medical ordinance is out of date and need to amend it.</li> <li>President/CSSL said that CSSL initially refused to recommend for registration of these doctors as consultants, then SLMC has asked whether CSSL can recommend registering them as Senior Mos.</li> </ul>	

- President/GMOA said that this is the high time to correct all these and need overall policy development.
- President/GMOA suggested:

- To appoint a committee under the chairmanship of DGHS to evaluate and to look into the possible amendments of the medical ordinance.  
Time frame should be 3 to 6 months. LOJ/MoH to be included in the committee.
  - To formulate a policy proposal for the interim period by the MoH. For this purpose MoH should get representation of all stakeholders including the private sector.
  - To have a preliminary inquiry regarding the registration of two unqualified doctors and to withdraw the registration.  
A letter enlightening this issue and fresh evidence to be given by the GMOA to DGHS.
- It was agreed to implement the suggestions made by the President/GMOA at this meeting.
  - It was decided to hold all registrations of foreign doctors until this issue is resolved.

Sec/Health  
DGHS

GMOA  
Association of  
Cardiothoracic  
Surgeons

DGHS  
SLMC

Dr Ravindra Ruberu  
Secretary/Health


Dr. Ravindra Ruberu  
Secretary

Ministry of Health

"Suwasiripaya"

305, Rev. Baldegama Wimala, -a, Tatro Mawatha,  
Colombo 10, Sri Lanka.

## Annexure – 5: Memo and agenda of the Brainstorming Workshop



**GMOA**  
TU No. 291  
ESTABLISHED IN 1926  
THE GOVERNMENT MEDICAL OFFICERS' ASSOCIATION  
No. 275/75, Professional Centre, Prof. Stanley Wijesundera Mawatha, Colombo 07

Tel : 2500886 / 0714 999555  
Fax : 2503586 / 4318668  
Web : www.gmoa.lk  
Email : gmoa@netnet.lk

04.11.2011

Dear Sir,

**Registration of Foreign Medical Professionals and Establishment of a Specialist Registry**


GMOA would like to invite you to discuss the following matters to reach consensus and to develop transparent policies. This meeting will be chaired by Director General of Health services.


- 1. Registration of Foreign Medical Professionals in Sri Lanka**  
GMOA raised the issue of employment of substandard medical practitioners as specialists and assistant specialists in the private sector in the recent past. Lack of a proper evaluation process to assess the qualifications and skills of foreign specialists have led to several problems. According to the request made by GMOA, Secretary of the Ministry of Health appointed a committee chaired by DGHS to draft a policy. Draft policy document is attached herewith for your perusal.
- 2. Establishment of a specialist register in SLMC by incorporating it to the Medical Ordinance**  
Currently there is no Specialist registry in Sri Lanka. As a consequence, a situation has arisen where many unqualified doctors have been allowed to practice as specialists in various disciplines in the private sector.

This meeting will be held on 18.11.2011 from 8.30a.m. - 12.30p.m. at the New Auditorium of the Ministry of Health. (We apologize for postponing the meeting)

Your participation will be highly appreciated.

Thank you.

  
Dr. Anuruddha Padeniya  
President



**GMOA**  
ESTABLISHED IN 1926  
TU No. 291  
THE GOVERNMENT MEDICAL OFFICERS' ASSOCIATION  
No. 275/75, Professional Centre, Prof. Stanley Wijesundera Mawatha, Colombo 07

Tel : 2500886 / 0714 999555  
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Web : www.gmoa.lk  
Email : gmoa@netnet.lk


GMOA/Specialist/2011  
11/11/2011

**Work shop on establishment of a Specialist Registry & registration of foreign doctors**

On 18/1/2011 at 8.30am  
Ministry of Health auditorium.

<b>Programme</b>	
Chair	- Director General of Health Services.
<b>Agenda</b>	
8.30 hours	- Registration.
9.00 hours	- Welcome speech.
9.10 hours	- Introduction-Dr.Anuruddha Padeniya President, GMOA.
9.30 hours	- Current registration procedure in Sri Lanka-SLMC
9.45 hours	- Registration of a foreign medical practitioners by Dr.Kanthi Ariyaratne, Director private Health sector
10.00 hours	- Deficiencies in current registration procedure by Dr.Mahendra Munasinghe (Consultant Cardiothoracic Surgeon).
10.15 hours	- Tea.
10.45 hours	- Presentation of Proposed Drafts by academic /Professional bodies, 10 minutes each.
12.15 hours	- Appointment of a committee to develop a mechanism and to identify criteria for the specialist registry.
12.30 hours	- Vote of thanks – Dr. Chandika Epitakaduwa, Secretary GMOA

Thank you,  
Yours faithfully,

  
Dr.Chandika Epitakaduwa,  
Secretary.

## Annexure – 6: Report of the Workshop on 18/11/2012

### The Report of the Workshop - Establishment of a Specialist Registry and Registration of Foreign Doctors - Organized by the GMOA

<b>Chair</b>	–	Director General of Health Services (DGHS)
<b>Convener</b>	–	Government Medical Officers Association (GMOA)
<b>Date</b>	–	18.11.2011
<b>Venue</b>	–	Auditorium, Ministry of Health

#### Participants

Department of Health  
Sri Lanka medical Council (SLMC)  
Post Graduate Institute Medicine (PGIM) with all Chairmen of Boards of Study  
Sri Lanka Medical association (SLMA) and all Profession colleges & associations  
All Medical Specialists  
Post-graduate trainees of the PGIM

#### Agenda

08.30h	Registration
09.00h	Welcome Speech - Dr. D.C. Rajapaksa, Convener, Specialist Subcommittee/GMOA
09.10h	Introduction -Dr. Anuruddha Padeniya, President/GMOA
09.30h	Current Registration Procedure in Sri Lanka-Dr. Nihal Nonis, Registrar/SLMC
09.45h	Registration of foreign medical practitioners-Dr.Kanthi Ariyaratne, Director Private Health Sector
10.00h	Deficiencies in current registration procedure-Dr. Mahendra Munasinghe, Consultant Cardiothoracic Surgeon
10.15h	Tea
10.45h	Presentation of proposed drafts by academic /professional bodies- 10 minutes each
12.15h	Appointment of a committee to develop a mechanism and to identify criteria for the specialist registry
12.30h	Vote of thanks-Dr. Chandika Eritakaduwa, Secretary GMOA

#### Presentations were made on the following topics

1. Current registration procedure.
  2. Shortcomings of the current system.
  3. Requirement of foreign specialists.
  4. Proposed procedure for registration of foreign specialists
  5. Proposed inclusion criteria for the specialist registry
  6. Recognition of a Specialist in relevant fields.
- The presentations made of Colleges of Physicians, Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, Cardiologists, and Psychiatrists.

## Current Registration Procedure

**Dr. Nihal Nonis**, Registrar SLMC, in his presentation explained the current registration process of a foreign medical specialist in Sri Lanka. The following points were highlighted in his presentation.

- They are registered under the provision provided by the section 67A of Medical Ordinance.
- The applicant should submit his/her CV along with supporting documents and the letter of sponsorship by the prospective local employer to the DGHS.
- The DGHS will submit the credentials of the applicant to the relevant college for evaluation and obtain their recommendations to register the applicant as a specialist in Sri Lanka.
- Alternatively according to Section 67A the DGHS has the sole authority to appoint a committee to evaluate the application form and give its recommendations without the concurrence of the relevant professional body.
- Other than DGHS the secretary of health of a Dean of a medical faculty can recommend the SLMC regarding the suitability of the applicant to function as a specialist.

## Shortcomings of the current system

**Dr. Mahendra Munasinghe**, Consultant Cardiothoracic Surgeon at LRH presented an informative and comprehensive lecture regarding the flaws of the current registration system of foreign medical specialists in Sri Lanka. He highlighted the following loopholes in the current registration process.

1. There aren't strict criteria laid down to evaluate professional qualifications of foreign medical specialists in Sri Lanka.
2. Evaluations of professional qualifications are done only with the CV written by the applicant.
3. If the CV is not approved by the college extreme pressure is exerted on the panel to approve it.
4. If that fails another panel is appointed.
5. If it is still negative registration as a medical officer is granted for which no evaluation is necessary.
6. Registration is renewed over the counter every year indefinitely.

He further went on to say that neighboring India does not allow any foreign medical doctor to be employed in Indian soil except for charity purposes. In United Kingdom foreign doctors are considered for employment only if suitable candidates from UK or EEA are not available.

## Requirement of foreign specialists

**Dr. Kanthi Ariyaratna** who is the director of the private health sector development briefed the audience with regard to the requirement of foreign medical specialists to man the private hospitals round the clock.

She also elaborated the current practice which the private hospitals adopt in recruiting foreign medical specialists and how registration as a specialist is acquired.

She stressed the fact that the private hospitals should employ foreign medical specialists only when suitable Sri Lankan specialists are not available for the required post. At the same time the foreign medical specialists should have an equivalent training to that of their Sri Lankan counterparts and should be registered as consultant in their respective countries when granting registration as a specialist.

## Proposed procedure for registration of foreign specialists

**Dr. Kanthi Ariyaratna** also presented several suggestions on how to improve the current procedure. She proposed certain minimum requirements in advertising for recruitment, guidelines on how to apply, evaluation process through a committee consisting of all the stakeholders, guidelines on renewing registration and documents needed for the process. ( Annexure I)

## Proposed inclusion criteria for the specialist registry

**Dr. Rohan Gunawardene** Consultant Electro physiologist, NHSL, tabled the GMOA proposals for Specialist registration in Sri Lanka.

GMOA proposed that establishment of a specialist registry is a prerequisite for granting registration for foreign specialists. ( Annexure III)

Registration may be granted under two categories; Full and Limited, each under specific criteria.

GMOA also proposed an organized process for application for registration and a mechanism of evaluation.

**Dr. Raveen Hanwella** Consultant Psychiatrist NHSL highlighted the recognized qualifications for a consultant psychiatrist while pointing out that certain diploma holders in psychiatry are practicing as specialists in private sector. ( Annexure II)

He went on to say that people who belong to paramedical assistants of the SLMC are practicing as independent clinical psychologists in Sri Lanka and that they are not qualified enough to do so.

**Dr. S.Narenthiran** senior consultant cardiologist NHSL elaborated the current specialist training scheme for the local cardiology trainees which is very comprehensive and tedious maintaining the highest required international standards. ( Annexure II)

Therefore he suggested some obligatory criteria for foreign qualified cardiologists to practice as cardiologists a mechanism of scrutiny over their practice.

**Dr. Ananda Ranatunga** President of the College of Obstetricians & Gynaecologists explained about the registration criteria for specialists in Gyn/Obs. ( Annexure II)

**Dr. Ananda Wijewickrama** from Ceylon College of Physicians presented the proposed criteria for Physicians & related sub specialties. ( Annexure II)

## Discussion

The participants of this workshop unanimously agreed that the current medical ordinance is an out-dated document with lot of loop holes which needs to be amended to the needs of the modern era. Despite this fact changing the Medical ordinance under the Sri Lankan legal framework is a very cumbersome and a time consuming ordeal. Therefore some sort of interim measures should be drafted as regulations under the current provisions to streamline the registration process of foreign medical specialists and medical officers. There regulations should immediately address the loop holes in the existing system where unqualified foreign medical personnel gain registration from SLMC to practice as consultants in Sri Lanka.

The relevant professional bodies should present their suggestions to streamline the current registration process so that abusing the current system using loopholes will be prevented in the future. At the end all professional bodies of the Medical profession, PGIM and the Ministry of Health should formulate a draft proposal laying down strict guidelines to be adhered without any prejudice in granting registration to foreign medical specialists.

Developed countries maintain specialist registries in their respective Medical councils as an obligatory legal requirement as well as for the information of the general public. These countries are extremely cautious when foreign medical specialists are to be entertained to these registries. Foreign Medical specialists should prove themselves that they hold recognized and equivalent medical qualifications of the country concerned and must also make sure that they have adequate length of experience as an independent specialist in their home country before being registered as a specialist in developed country. Therefore it was

the view of all participants of this workshop that such strict criteria should also be adopted in Sri Lanka when registering a foreign medical specialist.

**Dr. Nihal Nonis** elaborated on the specialist list maintained by SLMC and how to be included in it. He further stated that this list is only for information purposes and not for registration purposes. There are forty nine (49) recognized specialties in Sri Lanka according to that registry. However, many speakers in the audience pointed out the shortcomings including the lack of awareness of it and its limited use since it's not compulsory for everyone to be included in it. At this point **Dr. Ananda Samaraksekara**, Consultant JMO, NHSL, pointed out that it is a good start to implement registration under current list strictly as a regulation under the provision of additional qualification, in the current Medical ordinance until the proper rules are implemented.

**Dr. Rohan Gunawardene** stressed the fact that SLMC should be the authority in registration of any kind of Medical qualification and the importance of involvement of relevant boards of studies in decision making.

**Dr. Raveen Hanwella**, Consultant Psychiatrist highlighted the need of recognition of a specialist clearly. He elucidated the fact that some unqualified doctors practice as specialists and certain paramedical categories practice as psychiatrists. Therefore there should be very transparent mechanism for identification of specialists in order to public to identify clearly who are the real specialists.

**Dr. S. Narenthiran**, Consultant Cardiologist, NHSL, explained the process of scrutiny in training of a specialist. He pointed out the fact that local trainees undergo a very comprehensive training program which ultimately culminates in the qualification. It is very difficult to assess the level of scrutiny a foreign qualified person has undergone in training, specially a field like cardiology. He emphasized that training should be under one supervisor and correct job description has to be addressed.

**Dr. Ananda Ranathunga**, Consultant Obstetrician and Gynaecologist and **Dr. Ananda Wjewickrama**, Consultant Physician emphasized the fact that foreign specialists who come to this country should have worked in their countries in same capacity before arriving Sri Lanka.

**Dr. Ranjan Fernando**, Consultant ENT Surgeon, stated that a specialist is a person who has knowledge, skills and experience in the relevant field and therefore needs special registration.

**Dr. Lalantha Ranasinghe** and **Dr. Ruwan Fonseka** in their comments mentioned the importance of empowering the SLMC in every aspect in order to safeguard the profession in the future with considering the current situation in the country. **Dr. Ranasinghe** further mentioned that the inflow of Indian doctors is the main issue that we should address. He stated that it should be very clear in the regulations that there is no need of foreign Medical officers and that in the case of specialists, only very few areas still have shortages.

**Dr. Nazar**, **Dr. Mangala Gunathilaka** and **Dr. Bandu Gunasena** also expressed their views and contributed to discussion. It was mentioned that when recruiting a specialist the advertisement should be of a specific size and acceptable salary scale has to be stated to prevent favors.

**Dr. Wimal Jayantha** (from chair) stated that many issues have arisen with the Private Health Regulatory Council under PMIR act. It was mentioned that there were many shortcomings of this act and it had to be dealt with caution. He further mentioned that when amending the medical ordinance the PMIR act also taken into consideration in order to close the loop holes in PMIR act. At this point **Dr. Anuruddha Padeniya** stated the history of PMIR act and consequences. He mentioned the problems raised by CEPA agreement and that it needs to be addressed in a more global perspective.

It was mentioned that private hospitals should have specialists to man their hospitals around the clock. Therefore there has to be a mechanism where government specialists can be mobilized to the private sector. **Prof. Lamabadusooriya** suggested that government specialists needed to be employed in sectional basis as an option.

Further is was agreed to withhold the previous draft submitted by the SLMC to the ministry and incorporate those proposals also to agreements of this meeting to come out with better legislations.

#### **At the end the house came out with following decisions.**

- Circulate the draft of the meeting to concerned parties for further consensus.
- Agreeable points will put forward as proposal for amendment for ordinance.
- Involve representation from private sector medical directors for opinion.
- Form out regulations under the current ordinance as an interim measure.
- When final draft is ready go for wider stakeholder consultation.
- Appoint a committee to develop the document including following.
  1. Representative from Each specialist College.
  2. Director or Deputy Director of PGIM.
  3. Representatives from Ministry of Health.
  4. Representatives from GMOA.
  5. Representation from Dental colleges.
  6. Representative from Independent Medical Practitioners Association.

The meeting concluded with agreement to proceed further in order to make this national issue rectified.

***Compiled by Dr. A.Padeniya, Dr. W.Jayantha, Dr. D.C.Rajapaksa, Dr. R.Gunawardana, Dr. S.Kannangara, Dr. C. Epitakaduwa, Dr. S.Marasinghe, Dr. N.Ariyaratne, K.Weerasinghe***



Dr. Wimal Jayantha,DGHS (Right) ;

Dr. A.B. Padeniya, President GMOA  
(Center);

Dr. D.C. Rajapaksha, Convener (Left)



The Workshop in progress



Dr. N.J. Nonis and

Prof. S.anath P. Lamabadusooriya

## Annexure – 7: Feedback forms from Professional Colleges

The image shows three overlapping feedback forms titled "Specialist Qualification for Registration under Sri Lanka Medical Council". Each form includes sections for "Name of the Organization", "Address", "Specialty", "Qualification", "President", and "Secretary".

**Form 1 (Left):** Sri Lanka College of Dentistry. President: Dr. R. S. Jayasinghe. Secretary: Dr. R. S. Jayasinghe.

**Form 2 (Middle):** Sri Lanka College of Dentistry. President: Dr. R. S. Jayasinghe. Secretary: Dr. R. S. Jayasinghe.

**Form 3 (Right):** Sri Lanka College of Dentistry. President: Dr. R. S. Jayasinghe. Secretary: Dr. R. S. Jayasinghe.

## Annexure – 8 : Covering Letter of the Workshop on 10/05/2012

**CMOA**  
THE GOVERNMENT MEDICAL OFFICERS ASSOCIATION  
No. 12/175, Professional Centre, 1st Floor, Rajapalace, Colombo 17

Tel : 2500886 / 0714 999555  
Fax : 4818888 / 2503588  
Email : info@cmoa.lk  
info@cmoa.lk

CMOA/IN/COLLEGE  
02/05/2012

To:  
President, Sri Lanka Medical Council  
President, Sri Lanka Medical Association  
Director, Post Graduate Institute of Medicine  
Presidents of all Professional Colleges/Associations  
Chairmen of all Boards of Studies,

Dear Sir/Madam

**Consensus Workshop: Empanelment of Foreign Medical Specialists and Formation of a Specialist Registry**

The initial brainstorming session regarding the above matter held on 18/11/2011 was concluded successfully with a wide representation from all stake holders.

A Detailed report and the draft proposal of recruitment of foreign specialist were also circulated among all professional colleges & boards of studies for feedback.

We are happy to inform that most of the professional bodies responded with their views and suggested amendments to the draft.

The next consensus workshop will be held on 10<sup>th</sup> May 2012 at 1.00 pm at the Health Ministry Auditorium, chaired by Dr. Ruwinda Rubens, the Secretary of Health to finalise the acceptable specialist qualifications forwarded by the relevant professional bodies.

We request the participation of your organization at this event to support this endeavor with your invaluable contribution to make it a success.

We also kindly request to forward the feedback forms the earliest possible.

Thank you

*[Signature]*  
Dr. Anuraadha Padetika  
President

## Annexure – 9: Report of the Consensus Workshop

### ESTABLISHMENT OF A SPECIALIST REGISTRY AND REGISTRATION OF FOREIGN DOCTORS – Report of the Workshop

<b>Chair</b>	– Director General of Health Services (DGHS)
<b>Convener</b>	– Government Medical Officers Association (GMOA)
<b>Date</b>	– 10.05.2012
<b>Venue</b>	– Auditorium, Ministry of Health

#### Participants

Department of Health  
Sri Lanka medical Council (SLMC)  
Post Graduate Institute Medicine (PGIM) with all Chairmen of Boards of Study  
Sri Lanka Medical association (SLMA) and all Profession colleges & associations  
All Medical Specialists  
Post-graduate trainees of the PGIM

#### Agenda

01.00 pm	Registration
01.15 pm	Welcome and introduction Dr. Anurudhdha Padeniya President GMOA
01.30 pm	Speech by Dr Ravindra Ruberu Secretary MOS
01.45pm	Presentation of proposed inclusion criteria for Specialist Registration
02.30pm	Final discussion and Agreement for Specialist registry
02.45pm	Tea
03.00pm	Proposed evaluation procedure for Employment of Foreign Qualified Specialist in Sri Lanka by Dr. Kanthi Ariyaratne, Director, PSHD
03.30pm	Conclusive Remarks and Vote of Thanks by Dr. Saman Wadanambi, Vice President, GMOA

#### The Following Points were discussed

4. Acknowledgement of Specialist qualifications presented by the respective colleges
5. Formation of Specialist registry and its inclusion criteria.
6. Discussion and corrections in the draft procedure of registering foreign specialists

#### Discussion - Formation of the Specialist Registry

At the outset **Dr. Anurudhdha Padeniya** President-GMOA welcomed the gathering and thanked for the contribution made from the previous workshop. He stressed the importance of make regulation in employing the foreign doctors on clinical grounds as we are going to lose the existing trivial legal protection also, when CEPA agreement in fully implemented. He also briefed the context of CEPA agreement and how it is going to affect the medical profession in the country. Therefore the this legislation is a timely need and we have to move swiftly to protect our profession and public from influx of low quality foreign doctors while allowing the inflow of skilled expertise from overseas.

**Dr. Saman Wadanambi** Vice President -GMOA then presented the specialist qualification list identified by the respective colleges to be included in the specialist registry. **Dr. Ramya Amarasena** from College of Anaesthesiologists expressed her views regarding subspecialties where there is no current board certifications. **Dr. Ananda Wijewickrama** also expressed his views and stated that there are vacancies in the ministry of health the people working there is not specialized that field. For example the interventional

radiologist post in NHSL is being covered by a general radiologist. **Dr. Jerad** also showed that consultant immunologist post in MRI is held by a general pathologist.

At this point **Dr. Neville Perera** stated that those are post of the ministry of health and they cannot be given in specialist registration on that ground. However if they have underwent special training and function as a capacity of a PGIM trainee in respective field they are eligible for specialist registration in respective field.

Dr. Wadamanbi has elaborated the qualifications presented by the relevant colleges to be recognized as specialist. All of them agreed on PGIM board certification is the main source of specialist and there may be few alternate routes, which should be strictly monitored.

However, letter from college of general practitioners stated that they cannot recognize the general practice as a specialty. stated that they cannot recognize the general practice as a specialty. stated that they cannot recognize the general practice as a specialty.

At the end of discussion the house come into consensus about inclusion criteria in Specialist registry.

#### General Requirements:

5. Citizen of Sri Lanka
6. SLMC Registration as a doctor.
7. Good Standard certificate from the Respective College with credentials.
8. Payment of fees
  - a) Rs. 5,000 for Board certified specialists
  - b) No fee for Board eligible trainers in pre PGIM era.
  - c) Rs. 25,000 for those who process foreign qualifications

#### Qualifications :

4. Granted Board eligibility before the before 01.01.1980
5. Board certification in a specialty of sub specialty by relevant board of study PGIM
6. Recognition of foreign qualifications in a specialty or sub specialty by the evaluation committee.

#### Final Consensus

The ownership of the Specialist Registry with SLMC

Ministry of health should not employ consultants without specialist registration in respective field in public sector. ( if there no registered specialist the acting consultant post can be given to most suitable candidate)

#### The committee

Director General of Health Services or nominee

The Director Post Graduate Institute of Medicine (PGIM) or nominee

A nominee of the President SLMC.

Three representatives of the relevant college

The Chairman of the relevant Board of Study of PGIM or nominee

## Discussion Registration of Foreign Specialists

Health Sector Development. Several corrections were suggested by the gathering in order to cover all the loopholes. **Dr. Mahendra Munasinghe** pointed out that the SLMC recognized primary degree is pre-requisite and he wonder why later it was changed to Avicenna or the FAIMER International data base. **Dr. Sarada Kannangara** explained that some reputed universities like Harvard are not in the SLMC recognized list and recourse persons for workshops and teaching sessions may be from those universities. Therefore if we strict to SLMC recognized basic degree rule it might be an unnecessary barrier. **Dr. Wimal Jayantha** from chair clarified we have to be very careful when removing that also because it might make a loophole. Therefore it was agreed that the requirement of basic degree recognition is not necessary for resource persons attend for training sessions. However the organizing college should take responsibility for the skills and qualifications of the person who perform clinical work.

The next point to clarify was some foreign doctors may visit for research purpose and if their research is involved with patient intervention. **Dr. Wimal Jayantha** stated that it is not treating the patients and that is not under the scope of this discussion. However **Dr. Ramya Amarasena** pointed we should not keep any loop holes. Therefore it was agreed to include the foreign Clinical researchers also need to get temporary SLMC registration for the period of study.

After discussions the house prepared the final draft in two forms for registration for non-profitable work and for employment in private sector hospitals.

