

International Christian Medical & Dental Association

No: 19, Doctors Avenue, Near Sherwood, Thutthipet PO, Vellore- 632011

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September 6, 2018

Dr. Yoshitake Yokokura
President, World Medical Association
Dr. Otmar Kloiber
Secretary General, World Medical Association
13, ch. du Levant
CIB – Batiment A
01210 Ferney-Voltaire
France
wma@wma.net

Dear Dr. Yokokura and Dr. Kloiber:

The International Christian Medical and Dental Association (ICMDA) is an International association of 84 national organizations that exist to help their members integrate their Christian faith with the practice of medicine and dentistry. The aim of the international organization is to provide a forum for the exchange of views, information and experiences in the fields of medicine and dentistry, particularly where these concern Christian faith and ethics.

Our world congress was held recently in Hyderabad, India from August 21-26, 2018. It brought together leaders from almost all of our national organizations from around the world. At our general assembly our members unanimously supported the following statement related to two matters that will be discussed at the World Medical Association meeting from October 3 – 7, 2018 in Reykjavik, Iceland. I am writing to you to make you aware of the sincere concerns that your discussions have generated.

1. Revisions to abortion policy

We understand that a draft abortion policy will be voted on at the meeting. We ask that conscience protection provisions be strengthened before that draft policy is passed. The protection of those physicians who are unable to participate in certain procedures because of religious, professional or ethical concerns should be an important goal of this policy. Failure to respect physician's moral convictions and professional independence could result in the exclusion of conscientious physicians from the practice of medicine, with a resulting negative impact on patient care.

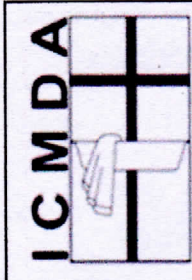
Dr. Vinod Shah-CEO vinod.shah@icmda.net

Dr. Elmer Thiessen - Chairman

Dr. Kevin Vaughan – Vice Chairman

Dr. Vijay Aruldas-Treasurer

Sharing God's Grace at the Growing Edges of Christian Medicine



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We respectfully raise the following concerns with the draft wording:

- a. This policy only explicitly protects conscientious objection to the *performance* of an abortion. Conscientious objection rights should also include referral or arranging for an abortion to take place.
- b. The draft policy includes the requirement to perform a procedure when necessary to save a woman's life and to prevent serious injury to her health. Performing an abortion in the rare circumstances in which it is necessary to save a woman's life is clearly permissible, even for physicians who would otherwise oppose abortion. However, if "serious injury to her health" is interpreted as emotional health this clause could require a physician to prescribe a chemical abortion, or the morning after pill in certain circumstances. This requirement would make it impossible for many Christian doctors to practice medicine.

We respectfully request the following changes to the draft policy (in red):

*"Physicians have a right to conscientious objection to **advising, referring for or performing** an abortion; therefore, they may withdraw while ensuring the continuity of medical care by a qualified colleague. In all cases, doctors must perform those procedures necessary to save the woman's life and to prevent serious injury to her **physical** health."*

2. Discussion of physician assisted suicide and euthanasia policy

We fully support the current policy of the WMA and ask that it be maintained.

Furthermore, we ask that the WMA support provisions to protect conscientious objectors in those jurisdictions where it is legal from having to participate *in any way* against their conscience

In conclusion, Christian health professionals and facilities are making a significant contribution to patient care worldwide. We respectfully ask that these concerns be addressed so that we can continue to serve God by serving our patients.

Sincerely,

Dr. Vinod Shah, CEO
International Christian Medical and Dental Association

