

May 2021

Vellore News

CMCH Vellore Web site:
Australian FOV web site:
SA FOV email:

<http://www.cmch-vellore.edu>
<http://www.australianfov.net.au>
safriendsofvellore@gmail.com

CANCELLED: SA FOV Annual Dinner 2021

Despite initially anticipating the SA FOV annual dinner would go ahead this year, the SA FOV committee has made the difficult decision to cancel this event. We feel that given the delicate situation with COVID cases in SA and throughout Australia that it would be irresponsible to hold such a gathering - even if current restrictions would allow for a reduced capacity event. The potential for COVID break outs at any time also weighed heavily on our minds.

In lieu of this fundraising event, and noting that the dire COVID situation in India requires urgent international assistance, we are appealing to all South Australian Friends of Vellore to donate generously to CMC Vellore.

Please see the included letter from the President of SA FOV, Dr Renjy Nelson about donating to CMC Vellore. Tax deductible donations to CMC can be made online at:
<http://australianfov.net.au/donations/>

We have also attached information regarding donating to mission hospitals that are part of the Christian Medical Association of India.

Fundraising
for CMC

SA FOV
Dinner 2021
Cancelled

COVID
CMC Update

From Dr Renjy Nelson, President of SA Friends of Vellore

Dear all,

We have all been affected by the disastrous second wave of the Covid Crisis in India. It has been frustrating and heartbreaking to watch the news on the media and even more to learn about the on ground realities through our own private information channels. Many of us have been moved to actively do things to support in whatever way we can from this distance.

After learning about the plight of our mission hospitals in India exacerbated and stretched to breaking point by this crisis, I want to share with you another opportunity to help meaningfully.

1. Donations directly to CMC Vellore through Friends of Vellore Association.

The details are on the attached document. The preferred options in order are

- a) BSB transfer (please enter your details including email address and the FOV treasurer will email or mail you a receipt)
- b) Paypal (will generate a receipt immediately).
- c) Cheques (please mail to Stephen Ashirvadam or Richard Caitens and not state treasurers).

As mentioned in the letter, please reach out to those who you would have invited to the Friends of Vellore Dinner (as we have chosen this as an emergency instead of having the dinner this year).

2. Mission Hospitals in Rural India through Health Serve Australia (in partnership with CMC Alumni Association).

The details are in the attached document. All payments will go either directly to a chosen and validated mission hospital for specific needs or to CMAI (Christian Medical Association of India) who is supporting and working closely with the mission hospitals to get the emergency equipment or supplements needed.

CMAI and CMC Missions directorate are working closely with the individual Mission hospitals to ensure that the money is utilised for necessary equipment or personnel from legitimate vendors and that the donations are appropriately focused on managing the Covid related challenges.

South Australian Friends of Vellore Committee

President: Dr Renjy Nelson, Vice President: Kumar Arpudaswamy

Secretary: Luisa Mozzi, Treasurer: Dr Ian Roberts-Thomson, Editor: Gary Fielke, safriendsofvellore@gmail.com

Please make your donation on the HealthServe donation page. We have a running list of requests from hospitals that we are continually validating and updating as they come in. We are also monitoring which needs are being met as the situation evolves and which are pending and urgent.

If you know of a specific hospital that may also have needs precipitated by the Covid crisis, we are very happy to add them to our list for the due diligence process.

[All donations to CMC Vellore \(through FOV\) and Mission Hospitals \(through Health Serve Australia\) are tax-deductible.](#)

There is a definite urgency with this request and please reach out and feel free to send it to anyone who is keen to help! It would be great if we could all work together to send as much money in the first two weeks.

Thank you,
Renjy

COVID Update CMC: Some notes from the Director CMC Vellore, Dr J.V. Peter

CMC has been trying to rapidly scale down non-COVID work and upscale COVID work. They were able to add around 100 to 150 beds for COVID every week. However, the Government is keen that they should have around 1200 beds for COVID. This is going to be a very challenging task. At present, CMC has close to 700 patients under their care (which includes the home isolation care).



There are 3 bottlenecks.

1. Availability of sufficient number of trained manpower, more so medical manpower. This problem is compounded by the fact that the NEET exams for postgraduate students has been postponed and hence one batch has not yet joined (they normally join in April). The final year MD/MS exams have not taken place, and this will result in a shortfall of junior faculty who would generally join by May (this batch has completed the course and awaiting exams).
2. Shortage of life-saving equipment (ventilators, monitors, pumps). Although CMC ramped up this last year significantly and in a sense are much better prepared, it is the expectation of the government that they provide additional Level 2 and 3 beds. What is different from the 1st wave is that patients are younger and sicker, and the surge is happening much faster and hence they are likely to get overwhelmed quickly. These have resulted in needing to manage sicker patients in the Level 2 (on non-invasive ventilation). Some additional equipment has been ordered and we hope to get them soon.
3. Short supply of life-saving medications and drugs (particularly Remdesivir, Tocilizumab and oxygen). They are OK with oxygen supplies so far and have a concentrator in the Kannigapuram campus and one in the main campus. Some friends of CMC locally have pitched in to fund another oxygen concentrator in the main campus (costs have gone up significantly). However, these will meet only about 20% of their needs. CMC is reaching out to many sources for supply of medications, and this is a challenge.

Referring to Australian Friends of Vellore suggestion that we will concentrate on trying to help with the Vaccination project, JVP agreed it would be good to have a focused campaign targeting on a particular need. He likes the vaccination part since this is focused and it will aim to protect beneficiaries against infection. Just a few days back the Government has opened procurement of the vaccine by private players (at much higher costs). However, the supplies are limited. Many have paid for the vaccine. However, staff and the outreach population near Kannigapuram were supported by CMC. The cost of running this program was also much higher than what CMC could charge (Rs 250 per dose, AUD 5). Of this they had to pay Rs 150 to the government to buy the vaccine and the remaining was to be used for consumables (needles, syringes), manpower as well as infra-structure cost of running the program.



Australian Friends of Vellore



Christian Medical College and Hospital, Founded in 1900, CMC has been serving the nation for 120 years is a 3,000-bed charitable teaching hospital providing healthcare to 3 million patients each year, known for compassionate, cost-effective health care, high quality education, cutting-edge scientific research and community outreach.

India is in a desperate situation with cases of COVID-19 peaking above 400,000 each day and recorded deaths above 4,000 each day.

CMC has been trying to rapidly scale down non-COVID work and upscale COVID work. It has accepted the challenge of providing **1,500 of its 3,000 beds for the care of COVID patients**, at CMC's expense, scaling up the COVID beds including intensive care beds by 100 to 150 beds each week.

CMC urgently needs **life-saving equipment** including that to provide oxygen, ventilators, drugs, and personal protective equipment (PPE). It is also purchasing vaccines and establishing a vaccination clinic.

Thank you,
Renjy Nelson
President, Friends of Vellore (SA)

The Friends of Vellore SA have decided not to hold its Annual Dinner this year as funds are urgently needed now. We therefore urge our loyal supporters who would have purchased a \$70 dinner ticket to donate at least that amount now, as well as others who may wish to show support for the CMC's fight against COVID.

We need your help to procure the funds needed for this fight. To support CMC's COVID effort in India please visit the following website:

<http://australianfov.net.au/donations/how-to-donate/>

To simplify the donation process, please donate to the **Australian Board of Vellore CMCH Support Fund** using the following options in order of preference - the **direct debit option or the PayPal option or by Cheques (please mail to Stephen Aseervatham or Richard Caitens)**

All donations are tax deductible. Please include your address and email to ensure you receive a receipt for tax deductibility and that your donation is for COVID.

We are sincerely grateful for your support over the years and give thanks for your response to this overwhelming need at CMC.



Christian Medical Association of India (CMAI)

Christian Medical Association (CMAI) is a network of 273 Christian member institutions, all of which are mission hospitals or organisations. They represent the **private not-for-profit sector of the healthcare delivery structure in India.**

They are distributed all over the country, predominantly in resource poor, semi-rural and tribal areas. 68% of the facilities are secondary care facilities, 17% are primary care and 15% are tertiary care facilities. The primary facilities cater to an average of around 21,000 outpatients, secondary facilities around 38,000 outpatients and tertiary facilities treated around 1,10,000 outpatients per annum.

India is in a desperate situation with cases of COVID-19 peaking above 400,000 each day and recorded deaths above 4,000 each day. The escalation of confirmed Covid 19 cases has brought with it an immense stress and strain to the whole healthcare system.

The second wave of the Covid 19 pandemic has hit rural India hard and these hospitals are seeing a huge surge of Covid patients. The need of the community is far beyond the ability of these hospitals in terms of bed availability, oxygen supply through cylinders or concentrators.

This will add to the already precarious financial situation most of them are in. This is because the Covid 19 Care is highly subsidised as per pricing of the state government and in some states free of cost. There is no reimbursement process in place despite claims and pleas.

Health Care Australia in partnership with Australasian Alumni Association CMC Vellore **is to mobilise help to support the COVID effort. This will be delivered to them through CMAI along with the Missions Department of CMC Vellore. In particular, we are trying to deliver portable oxygen cylinders and concentrators, oxygen plants, and other essential equipment as well as** train and equip health care personnel with the necessary skills to look after COVID 19 patients.

You can help by donating to

<http://www.healthserve.org.au/donate/fundraising-campaigns/india-covid-19-cmc>

If you choose to donate to a specific hospital, please nominate the hospital in the comment section.

Thank you,
Mahiban Thomas, President, Australasian Alumni Association CMC Vellore

New State-of-the-Art ICU Facility inaugurated: CMC Vellore Kannigapuram Campus Rises to the Need

CMC, Vellore responded to the urgent need of the hour and inaugurated a new twelve bedded intensive care unit (ICU) facility at the Kannigapuram campus. The fully furnished and equipped ICU was made functional at very short notice which initially felt like an impossible task.

The Medical ICU team, headed by Dr. Kishore Pichamuthu was asked to open out another ICU since the number of patients affected by Covid-19 requiring critical care was rapidly increasing. He was extremely thankful to the administration for having met all their needs. The task of setting up an entire ICU was not easy but was made possible only through the dedicated efforts of various teams involved in the Kannigapuram project including architects, engineers, builders, consultants, and others along with medical, nursing and other personnel of CMC. The inauguration took place on May 13, 2021.



Left to right – Dr. J.V. Peter, Dr. Manoj Job, Dr. Binila Chacko, Dr. Ashwin Oliver and Dr. Kishore Pichamuthu.

CMC Newslines May 17, 2021

As the number of COVID-19 cases continue to surge in South India, CMC has been rapidly increasing their capacity to care for patients with mild to severe cases. In the last two weeks alone, the number of COVID positive cases in Vellore has grown exponentially, requiring CMC to redesignate the use of their facilities to COVID care and escalate their medical manpower.



Within 10 days of opening the Paul Brand Block – which created 100 beds for “level 1” and “level 2” treatment, as well as a 12-bed “level 3” Intensive Care Unit (ICU) – CMC added an additional 12-bed ICU at their Kannigapuram campus. CMC staff worked around the clock to install and operationalise the new unit, which would help to ensure no patient was turned away for lack of a bed.

As of May 14th, CMC’s total COVID19 bed strength is now at 1,051, including 100 ICU beds. However, as their in-patient load exceeds 1,200, they are now taking on the challenge of creating a 200-bed COVID ward on the Kannigapuram campus, including an additional 12-bed ICU. Originally built to serve as a Level I Trauma Care Center and Higher Specialty Hospital, the new Kannigapuram campus has enabled CMC to efficiently manage COVID cases throughout the first and second wave of the pandemic.

Another challenge facing CMC is the shortage of personnel with proper COVID treatment training. CMC’s effort to resolve this issue is based on its ability to upskill its current medical staff. Presently, all doctors with a post-graduate background are undergoing specific training to manage level 2 patients, and those with a more specialized degree in medicine and related fields are being trained to manage level 3 patients. CMC’s staff members with specialization in pre-and para-clinical subjects have been trained and posted in level 1 wards under the supervision of physicians.

Vellore Christian Medical College Foundation (USA)

A reminder that if you wish to receive this newsletter by email and no longer require the paper form, please email: safriendsofvellore@gmail.com