INDIAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION – KARNATAKA STATE BRANCH

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PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS



Dr. Harisha Delanthabettu

President, IMA–Karnataka State Branch, 2026–27

MEDICON 2026, Shivamogga, Date: 24th October 2026

United in Service, Unwavering in Ethics, Committed to Doctors and Dedicated to Patients

Respected Shri U. T. Khader Fareed, Hon'ble Minister for Health and Family Welfare and Minorities Welfare, Government of Karnataka; Dr. Veerabhadraiah T. A., our beloved President, IMA-KSB, 2025-26; our esteemed Chief Guest, Dr. Dhananjaya R. Sarji, MLC, South West Graduates' Constituency and Chairman of the Sarji Group of Institutions; our honoured Guest of Honour, Dr. Nagendra S., Managing Director of the Subbaiah Group of Institutions; distinguished former State Presidents; respected senior leaders and office bearers of IMA; members of the State Working Committee; Presidents and Secretaries of IMA branches from across Karnataka; respected medical educators; senior and young medical professionals; members of the media; and my dear colleagues from the medical fraternity,

Today, as I assume the office of President of the Indian Medical Association, Karnataka State Branch, for the year 2026–27, I do so with immense humility, deep gratitude, an unwavering sense of responsibility, and a firm determination to serve.

My dear colleagues, I stand before you not as an individual who can accomplish everything alone, but as a representative of a united medical fraternity. I sincerely thank every leader, member, colleague, friend, and family member who has encouraged and supported me on this journey. I am particularly grateful to the leadership of IMA-KSB for placing its confidence in me. I assure you that I will approach this responsibility with sincerity, courage, transparency, and an open mind.

OUR VISION FOR 2026–27

One Association. One United Medical Fraternity. One Uncompromising Commitment to Ethical Healthcare.

The year 2025–26 laid an important foundation through constructive engagement with the Government of Karnataka on issues concerning fire safety regulations, simplification of KPMEA registration, and the protection of doctors. We must now move from dialogue to decisive action, from representations to measurable outcomes, and from promises to practical reforms. Our objective must be clear: to make every branch of IMA stronger, every member more connected, every doctor more secure, every healthcare institution better supported, and every patient more confident in our healthcare system.

I HEREBY PRESENT BEFORE YOU THE PRIORITIES THAT WILL GUIDE MY PRESIDENCY ,

1. ETHICAL MEDICAL PRACTICE AND SCIENTIFIC INTEGRITY:

The foundation of medicine is trust, and the foundation of trust is ethics. Our patients come to us at their most vulnerable moments. They expect not merely treatment, but honesty, competence, compassion, and respect. We must never allow commercial pressures, misinformation, unscientific claims, or professional misconduct to undermine this sacred relationship. IMA-KSB will uphold evidence-based medicine, professional ethics, scientific integrity, and patient safety. We will encourage continuing medical education, professional development, peer learning, and responsible clinical practice. We must also reject misinformation and encourage the public to seek qualified medical advice. The dignity of our

profession cannot be protected by words alone. It must be demonstrated through our actions every single day.

2. PROTECTION OF DOCTORS AND ZERO TOLERANCE FOR VIOLENCE:

A doctor who enters a hospital to save a life must never have to fear for his or her own safety. Violence against doctors, nurses, and healthcare personnel is unacceptable. No grievance, however serious, can justify assault, intimidation, vandalism, or threats against healthcare professionals. During my tenure, IMA-KSB will vigorously advocate the effective implementation of applicable laws protecting healthcare professionals. We will pursue prompt police action, fair investigations, appropriate legal assistance, and stronger preventive measures in healthcare institutions. We will work towards better hospital security, effective grievance-redressal mechanisms, emergency response protocols, and stronger coordination between hospital administrations, law enforcement agencies, and the Government. We will stand firmly against violence while encouraging dialogue, transparency, and mutual respect. Our message is unequivocal: protect those who protect life. A safe doctor is essential to a safe patient care.

3. STAND AGAINST QUACKERY AND MIXOPATHY:

IMA-KSB has consistently stood firm against quackery and the unauthorised practice of modern medicine by unqualified persons. We believe that the practice of medicine must be entrusted to appropriately qualified and legally authorised professionals. The unauthorised mixing of different systems of medicine, raises serious concerns regarding patient safety, professional standards, and accountability. IMA-KSB will continue to advocate strict enforcement of applicable laws against unqualified and unauthorised medical practice. We will engage with the government, regulatory authorities, and law-enforcement agencies to curb such practices. We will also promote public awareness about the dangers of receiving treatment from unqualified practitioners. Our stand is not against any recognised system of medicine, but against unlawful practice and the compromise of patient safety. IMA-KSB remains committed to protecting patients, upholding professional integrity, and ensuring that healthcare is delivered by qualified and legally authorised practitioners

4. SIMPLIFICATION, TRANSPARENCY AND SINGLE-WINDOW REGULATORY APPROVALS:

IMA-KSB will advocate a simplified, fully accessible online system for KPMEA registration and renewal, supported by advance reminders, uniform documentation requirements, transparent inspection standards, and an effective grievance-redressal mechanism. We will continue constructive engagement with the relevant authorities to address legitimate concerns and develop practical solutions.

5. CONTINUING THE EFFORTS TO REVIEW, REFINE, AND ENSURE THE PRACTICAL IMPLEMENTATION OF FIRE-SAFETY REGULATIONS:

Fire safety in healthcare establishments is non-negotiable. Every patient, healthcare worker, and visitor has the right to a safe environment. At the same time, compliance requirements must be scientifically sound, risk-based, proportionate, and practical, recognising the differing infrastructure and operational needs of small clinics, nursing homes, and large multispecialty hospitals without compromising safety. IMA-KSB has achieved a significant milestone in the formulation of regulations for fire safety measures through sustained dialogue and constructive engagement with the government and its various departments. We will pursue uniform and transparent implementation of applicable government rules and the revised requirements of 2026, with clear guidelines on timelines, inspections, documentation, and compliance.

6. STRENGTHENING SMALL AND MEDIUM HOSPITALS:

Small and medium hospitals are indispensable to Karnataka's healthcare system. They serve families in

villages, taluk headquarters, smaller towns, and semi-urban communities where access to large corporate hospitals may be limited. These institutions provide essential care, create local employment, and often serve patients with limited financial means. Their sustainability is therefore a matter of public interest. IMA-KSB will advocate simplified compliance, predictable regulatory procedures, digital administration, timely government-scheme reimbursements, and appropriate incentives for quality accreditation. Under schemes such as Ayushman Bharat–Arogya Karnataka (AB-ArK), package rates must reflect the actual cost of delivering safe and quality care. Claims should be processed transparently, deductions and rejections should be supported by fair and clearly defined criteria, and reimbursements should be made within stipulated timelines. We will engage constructively with the Government to identify practical solutions that protect both public resources and healthcare providers. Our aim is a fair partnership between the Government, healthcare providers, and patients—one that expands access without compromising quality.

7. STRENGTHENING FAMILY MEDICINE AND PRIMARY HEALTHCARE:

The future of healthcare depends not only on advanced hospitals and sophisticated technology, but also on strong primary healthcare and trusted family physicians. A family physician often knows the patient, the family, the community, and the social circumstances influencing health. Early diagnosis, preventive care, continuity of treatment, and timely referral can save lives and reduce avoidable healthcare expenditure. IMA-KSB will work with the Government of Karnataka, Rajiv Gandhi University of Health Sciences (RGUHS), medical colleges, and relevant institutions to promote continuing medical education, skill development, and structured learning opportunities in Family Medicine for MBBS doctors and family physicians. We will encourage training in the management of common illnesses, non-communicable diseases, geriatric care, emergency stabilisation, preventive medicine, and appropriate referral practices. We must make quality healthcare accessible not only to those living in major cities, but also to those in rural and under-served areas.

8. SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND A DRUG-FREE SOCIETY:

Our responsibility as doctors extends far beyond the walls of our clinics and hospitals. We witness the consequences of preventable diseases, malnutrition, tobacco use, alcohol-related harm, substance abuse, poor hygiene, mental distress, and unhealthy lifestyles. We also know that education, early intervention, and community participation can prevent much of this suffering. I call upon every IMA branch in Karnataka to strengthen its community outreach by adopting local government schools and villages wherever feasible and coordinating with local authorities and community organisations. Our outreach programmes should address nutrition, hygiene, diabetes, hypertension, anaemia, adolescent health, mental well-being, digital addiction, tobacco and alcohol related harm, first aid, and the prevention of communicable and non-communicable diseases. We will continue existing IMA-KSB initiatives and promote a statewide movement under the powerful slogan: “ವೈದ್ಯರ ನಡಿಗೆ – ನಶಾಮುಕ್ತ ಸಮಾಜದ ಕಡೆಗೆ” IMA's March Towards a Drug-Free Society. Let our doctors walk into schools, colleges, villages, and communities—not merely to treat illness, but to prevent it. Let us guide young people away from addiction, help families recognise early warning signs, and work with educators, parents, community leaders, and public authorities. We must approach addiction as a serious public-health concern, combining prevention, awareness, treatment, rehabilitation, and compassion.

9. EMPOWERING YOUNG DOCTORS, WOMEN DOCTORS, AND HONOURING SENIOR MEMBERS:

A strong association must create opportunities for every generation of doctors. Our young doctors bring energy, innovation, scientific curiosity, and new ideas. They need mentorship, professional guidance, leadership opportunities, academic exposure, and support in navigating the challenges of their early careers. Women doctors must receive equal opportunities to lead, participate in decision-making, shape policies, and contribute to every level of the association. Their representation must be meaningful, and

their professional concerns must receive serious attention. Our senior members are the pillars on which our association stands. Their experience, wisdom, institutional memory, and lifelong service must continue to guide our decisions. During my presidency, I will encourage structured mentorship, leadership development, academic programmes, and meaningful participation by young doctors, women doctors, and senior members. We must also recognise the professional pressures faced by doctors at different stages of their careers and work towards a supportive, inclusive association.

10. DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION AND E- GOVERNANCE:

IMA-KSB will promote the digitalisation of its activities to enhance efficiency, transparency, accessibility, and accountability. We will strengthen digital communication, online membership services, electronic documentation, and virtual participation in meetings and programmes. A centralised digital platform will facilitate timely dissemination of information, streamline administrative processes, and improve coordination between the State Branch and local branches. Our objective is to build a technology-driven, transparent, and member-friendly organisation that is responsive to the evolving needs of the medical fraternity.

11. MEMBERSHIP GROWTH, AND MEMBER WELFARE:

The strength of IMA is its membership. Every doctor who joins strengthens our collective voice, our professional network, and our ability to bring meaningful change. I appeal to every IMA member across Karnataka: please bring at least one eligible doctor into our IMA family. Speak to your colleagues, explain the value of collective representation, and encourage them to participate actively in branch activities. Every member must experience the practical value of belonging to IMA. We encourage the eligible Doctors to become the Life members of IMA and get enrolled for the welfare schemes namely, IMA-KPPS, IMA-KSSS and IMA-KSHS. We will also strive to improve awareness of existing welfare schemes and expand their reach to eligible members and their families.

12. GOVERNMENT – IMA HEALTHCARE COORDINATION:

We recognise that public and private healthcare institutions are complementary pillars of healthcare delivery. Both have an important role in improving access, quality, affordability, and continuity of care. IMA must be a constructive, credible, and influential partner in shaping healthcare policy. Our role is not merely to raise concerns when difficulties arise. We must also contribute professional expertise, propose workable solutions, participate in consultations, and help develop policies that benefit doctors and patients alike. I will strive to establish a structured Government–IMA Healthcare Coordination System, bringing together relevant government departments, IMA-KSB representatives, healthcare institutions, and subject experts. Regular meetings, clearly defined agendas, documented decisions, responsible officers, implementation timelines, and reviews of action taken will help ensure that dialogue leads to results. As the President of IMA-KSB, also serves as an ex-officio member of the Syndicate of RGUHS, Karnataka, we have an important opportunity to contribute constructively to medical education and professional development. We must strengthen the bridge between the Government, universities, medical colleges, practising doctors, and society.

13. FAIR PRICING AND TRANSPARENCY IN MEDICINES AND MEDICAL SUPPLIES

Transparency in healthcare is essential to patient confidence. Patients deserve clear information about the medicines, medical devices, consumables, and services for which they are charged. At the same time, pricing policies must be carefully designed to reflect the realities of procurement, storage, quality assurance, inventory management, infrastructure, and the delivery of safe hospital care. The proposed mandatory display of landing or base price and maximum retail price (MRP) on bills for medicines, medical devices, and consumables in hospitals requires constructive discussion and a practical, legally sound

approach. On 13 October 2026, representatives of IMA-KSB met Sri U. T. Khader Fareed, Hon. Minister for Health and Family Welfare and Minorities Welfare, and presented our concerns regarding the notification. We are grateful that the Honourable Minister heard our representations and assured us that a suitable solution would be considered. We will continue to engage with the Government in a spirit of cooperation, seeking clarity on implementation and a balanced framework that protects patients while recognising the legitimate operational requirements of healthcare institutions

14. PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING OF MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS:

Behind every white coat is a human being. Doctors are expected to make difficult decisions, manage emergencies, communicate distressing news, work long hours, and remain composed under extraordinary pressure. Medical students and postgraduate trainees face their own demanding academic, clinical, and professional challenges. We cannot ignore the consequences of chronic stress, burnout, isolation, and psychological distress among our colleagues. A doctor who cares for everyone else must also be given the opportunity to be cared for. IMA-KSB will advocate supportive educational and workplace environments, appropriate measures to reduce avoidable stress, confidential access to psychological support, awareness programmes, and early intervention when colleagues are struggling.

Our goal is to ensure that no doctor ever feels alone when facing challenges. Let us work together in unity, engaging in constructive dialogue with the government, maintaining transparency with our members, and remaining committed to the welfare of patients. Together, let us strive to make healthcare safer, more equitable, and accessible to all.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Before I conclude, I express my heartfelt gratitude to IMA Bhadravathi and IMA Shivamogga for their wholehearted support and cooperation. I am deeply grateful to our beloved Dr. Nagendra Sir, Managing Director of the Subbaiah Group of Institutions, for his encouragement and support. I sincerely acknowledge the guidance and contributions of the leadership of IMA-KSB. My special thanks to Dr. T. A. Veerabhadraiah, our beloved Immediate Past President, IMA-KSB; Dr. Y. C. Yogananda Reddy; Dr. Honnegowda; Dr. Lakkol; and Dr. Madhusudhan Kariganuru for their unwavering support and encouragement. My heartfelt appreciation goes to the entire MEDICON 2026 organising committee, ably led by Dr. K. R. Ravish and Dr. Vinaya Srinivas, for their dedication, meticulous planning, and tireless efforts in organising this prestigious conference. I thank every member, colleague, volunteer, organiser, and well-wisher whose contribution has brought us together on this important occasion. I also extend my sincere gratitude to my family for their understanding, encouragement, and support. To all of you, I offer my assurance: I will value your trust, respect your advice, learn from your experience, and seek your active participation throughout this presidential year. Let us work together to make 2026–27, a year of unity, courage, meaningful reforms, professional solidarity, and compassionate service.

LONG LIVE IMA



Dr. Harisha Delanthabettu

President, IMA–Karnataka State Branch, 2026–27
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BRIEF INTRODUCTION

Dr. Harisha Delanthabettu is a psychiatrist, medical educator and public health professional whose career reflects a sustained commitment to patient care, mental health advocacy, medical ethics and service to the medical fraternity.

His educational journey began at Government Primary School, Shiriya, Kasaragod District, Kerala, and continued at Sri Sathya Sai Loka Seva Educational Institutions, Alike, his native place in Dakshina Kannada District of Karnataka, where he completed his high school and pre university education. He obtained his M.B.B.S. from Government Medical College, Mysore, in 1992, followed by M.D. in Psychiatry from Bangalore Medical College, Bengaluru, in 1998. Since January 2021, he has been serving as Professor and Head of the Department of Psychiatry at Subbaiah Institute of Medical Sciences, Shivamogga.

Earlier, he served on the faculty of Psychiatry at K.V.G. Medical College, Sullia. Further strengthening his interest in medico legal and ethical practice, he completed a Postgraduate Diploma in Medical Law & Ethics from the National Law School of India University, Bengaluru, in 2019.

PROFESSIONAL AND PUBLIC SERVICE:

Dr Harisha Delanthabettu is a member of IMA Bhadravathi and a Life Member of Indian Medical Association since 1993. His professional and public service roles include:

- Member, Karnataka State Legal Services Authority
- Member, Karnataka State Mental Health Authority, Government of Karnataka
- Member, Vision Committee on Mental Health, Brain Health and Substance Abuse, Department of Health & Family Welfare Services, Government of Karnataka
- Former Member, Juvenile Justice Board, Shivamogga (2017–2024)
- Former President, Indian Psychiatric Society – Karnataka Chapter (2014–2015)

SPORTS, ARTS AND PERSONAL LIFE:

A keen sports enthusiast, Dr. Harisha represented the University of Mysore in Volleyball in 1989. He continues to actively participate in sports and is presently an enthusiastic tennis player. He also has a keen interest in the traditional performing arts and is an Yakshagana artiste, reflecting his enduring connection with the rich cultural heritage of Karnataka. He is also a student of Vedic Philosophy.

In 2017, he was among the volunteers who undertook a hunger strike for 5 days during the mass protest at Belagavi opposing the contentious amendments to the Karnataka Private Medical Establishments (KPME) Act.

Dr. Harisha is happily married to Shubha, a qualified counsellor, who has been a constant source of support in his personal and professional journey and also supports him in his clinical practice. They are blessed with their son Dr. Shreyas, who is pursuing his postgraduate training in General Medicine at A.J. Shetty Medical College, Mangaluru.

RECOGNITION:

In recognition of his contributions to psychiatry and professional service, Dr. Harisha received the IMA Dr. Ramachandra N. Moorthy National Award in Psychiatry for the year 2016–17. Through his work in psychiatry, medical education, medico-legal services, addiction care, public health, sports, arts and professional leadership.