

Health Ministries News



GC Health Ministries Virtual Advisory Attendees

HEALTH MINISTRIES ADVISORIES

Virtual | General Conference and Divisions

On September 21-22, 2021 the General Conference Health Ministries (GCHM) department held its first division advisory for the quinquennium under the theme *I will Go Sharing Wholeness Serving All* via zoom. Division Health Ministries leaders representing the 13 divisions and 3 fields of the General Conference attended, eager to learn about the *I will Go* quinquennium theme. On day one, the GCHM team, Dr. Peter Landless (director) along associate directors Dr. Zeno Charles-Marcel, Dr. Katia Reinert and Dr. Torben Bergland, presented relevant topics focusing on ministering health and healing during the COVID-19 pandemic. Leaders were separated into break out rooms where they could share best practices being done in their own fields. On day two, Dr. David Trim provided an overview of the *I will Go* overall plans, and a discussion of specific HM related objectives and resources followed with practical information on implementation of the plan in the field. Following the GCHM advisory, Inter-American Division (IAD), Southern Asia-Pacific Division (SSD) and East Central Africa Division (ECD) held virtual advisories in October with great attendance of a vibrant and enthusiastic team of Union leaders ready to answer the call and equip others to say, *I will Go!*



COVID-19 & FUTURE PANDEMICS SYMPOSIUM

Chiapas, Mexico | Inter-America Division (IAD)

How do we prepare ourselves for a future pandemic? This was one of many questions discussed at a virtual symposium in September 2021. The discussion was virtual but the concerns are real. The event was organized by the of the Mexican Union of Chiapas's Health Ministries Director, Dr. Faustino de los Santos, and displayed the grace-filled ministry in which the church is engaged. The five panelists represented the diversity that characterizes comprehensive health ministry and responded with humility to the thoughtful, probing questions for over two hours. The objective was to inform the 740 attendees about caring for themselves and their loved ones during COVID-19 pandemic in all dimensions of their wellbeing (physical, mental-emotional, social and spiritual) and ways to prepare for the anticipated but unknown future "pestilences" that are hallmarks of the times in which we live. Dr. Charles-Marcel shared information and ministry challenges and innovations from the world fields. The ZOOM chat was abuzz with interaction, encouraging words and quotations, and expressions of gratitude and commitment to God.

Panelists in the Chiapas Symposium



COVID-19 Mental Health Initiative is Launched at Annual Council

Silver Spring, MD, USA | Inter-American Division (IAD)

António Guterres, the United Nations' (UN) Secretary-General, stated that the mental health of society has been severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic crisis and is a priority to be addressed urgently. He added that Mental health will remain a core concern even after the pandemic is over. In the US, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) stated that 41% study participants reported at least one adverse mental or behavioral health condition during the pandemic. "The increase in depression, anxiety, stress and trauma-related disorders, substance abuse and suicidal ideations is staggering" especially among 18-24 year-olds, with three in four reporting at least one adverse mental or behavioral health condition, and one in four reporting seriously having considered suicide in the past 30 days. In response to this great need, the General Conference launched a Mental Health initiative during the church's Annual Council on October 8, 2021. The goal is to raise awareness, provide resources and call people to action to help reverse these statistics. Education, Family, Youth and Health Ministries came together with the goal of promoting the initiative and motivating people to become involved. More information is available in page 2 of this newsletter under resources.

Covid-19 Mental Health Initiative



ADVENTIST MEDICAL ASSOCIATION HOLDS VIRTUAL CONFERENCE

São Paulo, Brazil | South American Division (SAD)

The Adventist Medical Association (AMA) held the 1st AMA Virtual Congress in partnership with the Adventist College of Bahia (Fadba), on November 28, 2021. The chosen theme was: "Healthy Mind: The Original Paradigm" and according to Dr. Lionel Leitzke, president of AMA, the expectations were surpassed. The goal was to explore Mental Health, focusing on the original paradigm created by God. The meeting was coordinated by Dr. Telmo Morsch and received speakers from different countries and health professionals and students, pastors and departments of the area, who were connected online in Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Paraguay, Uruguay, Bolivia. Telmo explains that the biggest challenge faced by health professionals in the context of mental health care is discrimination and lack of knowledge, hence the relevance of the event. Topics included research reports of the relationship between physical health and the mind, and a survey conducted with Adventist doctors on self-care. Over 150 subscribers attended the program live and over 500 have viewed the content on social media adapted for Portuguese and Spanish speakers.

Presenters during the AMA Online Congress



THE HEALTH CONNECTION

Every church a center of hope and health.

REACH UP

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Focus on a Spirit Led Revival



United in Prayer

"I will go...to the end," praying. The church is *United in Prayer*: A global prayer movement including 100 Days of Prayer and 10 Days of Prayer, in which hundreds of thousands of people have participated. With the COVID-19 pandemic sweeping our world, and with many unsettling events now taking place, what better time to be pressing together as a Church in prayer as we seek strength in time of crisis as well as Holy Spirit power for the mission before us? www.revivalandreformation.org/100days/blog/100

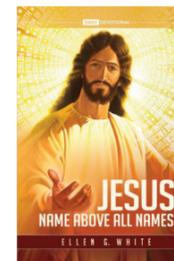


Believe His Prophets

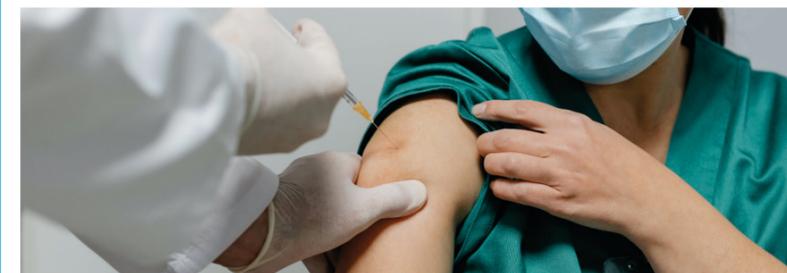
Believe His Prophets, the sequel to *Revived by His Word*, is a five-year program reading through the Bible and selected Ellen White writings, including *Steps to Christ*, *Christ's Object Lessons*, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, *Prophets and Kings*, *The Desire of Ages*, *The Acts of the Apostles*, and *The Great Controversy*. You can receive daily Bible readings, participate in interactive blogs and read select inspirational writings. Sign up at www.revivalandreformation.org/signup

Books

Jesus, Name Above All Names, by Ellen G. White. Ellen White used an amazing variety of names when she referred to Jesus—840, in fact. This 2021 devotional features 365 of them in readings that introduce readers to the One who gave His life to save us. <https://bit.ly/34skUzR>



COVID-19 Vaccine – Hope or Hoax?



2020 has been a year unprecedented in our lifetime. So much has drastically changed. "Flattening the curve", social distancing, masks and handwashing have become everyday language for all. COVID-19 has amplified isolation and loneliness, pointing to the need to stay connected albeit physically distanced. There have been efforts to establish a reliable evidence-based approach to treatment of COVID-19, though treatment and prevention have even been politicized in some countries. Thankfully, vaccines have been produced in record time and are now being used to help bring the pandemic under control. There are questions and also misinformation regarding COVID-19 vaccines. Dr. Michael Hogue, Dean of the Loma Linda School of Pharmacy, serves on the CDC Vaccine Taskforce. He shared insights about frequently asked questions on the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines:

"Have the vaccines been produced too fast to be reliably safe and effective?" Actually, the SARS-Cov-2 was sequenced within days of its being identified. The numbers of individuals enrolled in the current ongoing big vaccine study exceed the average numbers of previous studies testing previous vaccines. Regarding efficacy, the first dose gives 50% immune response protection; the second dose imparts 95% immune protection. Because this is an emergency use authorization release at present, the acceptance of the vaccine is voluntary, not mandatory.

Does the mRNA biotechnology, a first for vaccines, change our DNA? This technology has been used in medical treatments for 15 years. The vaccine enters the cell cytoplasm where the antibodies are created to fight the spike protein of the virus. The mRNA does not enter the cell nucleus, and therefore does not alter the cell's DNA or genetic structure/function.

Are the ingredients of the Pfizer/BioNTech and Moderna vaccines dangerous? There are no preservatives in these vaccines which is why the storage and transport require deep freeze facilities. Side effects of fever and body aches usually resolve within 72 hours. In the UK there were two significant allergic reactions (a low number, probably due to no preservatives)."

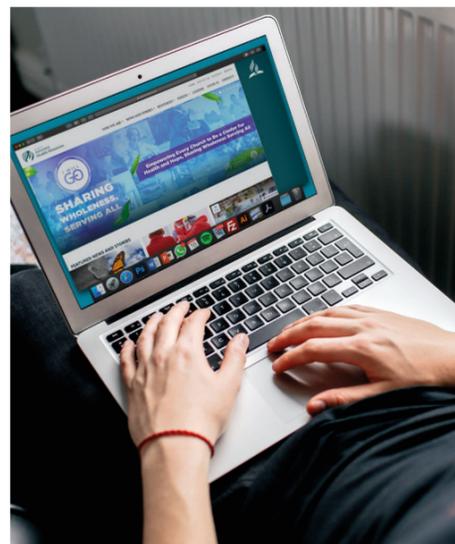
Dr. Hogue's perspectives are reassuring, affirming my decision to take the vaccine when it is offered to me. Taking the vaccine **in consultation with your health care provider's** advice would be a responsible approach to this crisis. For the SDA church's official position on vaccines see www.adventist.org/articles/immunization/.

Our holiday celebrations will be different. Some are mourning the loss of loved ones. Especially now, we need to cling to the promises found in God's Word! He has promised, "Never will I leave you, never will I forsake you", Hebrews 13:5, NIV. Thank you for your faithful work in Comprehensive Health Ministry, serving, supporting and extending the healing ministry of Jesus. In a little while we're going home. Encourage each other with this Good News, and do not grow weary in doing well! Maranatha - even so, come, Lord Jesus!



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Health Ministries Resources



• **COVID-19 Mental Health Initiative (MHI).** An initiative supporting mental health among youth and young adults during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. Through this COVID-19 Mental Health initiative we can counter isolation, loneliness and hopelessness by stimulating positive coping strategies and establishing appropriate support structures and initiatives where we are. Explore free resources and make a difference by becoming a #Covid19MHI ambassador. Learn more and sign up at <https://bit.ly/2J7MOda>

• **Adventist Church Official Statement on Immunizations.** Vaccines save millions of lives around the world every year by reducing transmission of infectious diseases that impact everyone, but specially the most vulnerable. The Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) church voted an official statement on immunizations some years ago that clarify the church's position on this issue. As a COVID-19 vaccine is being made available, fear and misinformation has brought doubt in the minds of many on whether to be immunized. Read and share the SDA church statement: <https://bit.ly/38mjf0>.

• **Adventist Health Ministries Leaders Page.** The General Conference Health Ministries (HM) department has launched a new website portal. In the new HM portal we are offering a page for HM leaders where resources and media can be accessed. If you are a HM leader for a church, conference or Union, you may register at the link below. Once approved, you are able to explore a variety of materials, presentations, and a media library with downloadable links. Register today at <https://bit.ly/38i3V3y>

• **World Cancer Day (February 4).** 2021 is the ultimate year of the 'I Am and I Will' successful 3-year campaign. More than ever, actions are also being felt across borders and oceans to raise awareness, prevent and find adequate treatment. When we choose to come together, we can achieve what we all wish for: a healthier, brighter world without cancer. This World Cancer Day, who are you and what will you do? Through positive actions, together we can reach the target of reducing the number of premature deaths from cancer and noncommunicable diseases by one third by 2030. For materials and free awareness resources go to <https://bit.ly/3mxcFjd>.

Dates to Remember

2021

February 7-11

Lifestyle Coaching Skills Training
LifeStart Health, Virtual

February 21-25

Lifestyle Coaching Skills Training
Middle-East North Africa Union, Virtual

MAY 12-15 *

AHSRA Annual Conference
To be announced

MAY 21-25 *

GC Session
Indianapolis, Indiana, USA

AUGUST 1-8 *

Youth Alive Training and Conference
Middle-East North-Africa Union, Egypt

*Tentative date



WHO and UN Health Calendar Emphasis



January-March

February 4
World Cancer Day

February 6
International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation

March 10
World Kidney Day

March 24
World TB Day

RESEARCH UPDATES

Share Facts with Hope and Positive Choices



• **Is it true that high amounts of Vitamin D (50,000-60,000 IU daily) is a good treatment for Covid-19?** High levels of vitamin and mineral supplements cannot cure COVID-19, and there is potential of intoxication in some cases. Micronutrients, such as vitamins D and C and zinc, are critical for a well-functioning immune system and play a vital role in promoting health and nutritional well-being. Some preliminary studies among COVID-19 patients have demonstrated the importance of having adequate levels of Vitamin D, and therefore it is recommended that people check their vitamin D levels and take a supplement as directed by their health provider. There is currently no robust evidence or specific guidance on the use of high levels of micronutrient supplements as a treatment of COVID-19. <https://bit.ly/3h4cmnR>



• **Do I still need to wear a mask after the COVID-19 vaccine is available?** Yes! Everyone should continue to wear masks, keep physical distance and wash hands before and after taking the COVID-19 vaccine. First, it will take time for everyone who wants a COVID-19 vaccination to get one. Then, while the vaccine may prevent someone with COVID-19 from getting symptoms, it is unknown at this time if it can prevent people from contracting the virus and staying asymptomatic. Until more is understood about how well the vaccine works especially for asymptomatic covid-19 disease, continuing with precautions such as mask-wearing and physical distancing will be critically important. <https://bit.ly/2J7Prvy>

• **Is dexamethasone a treatment for all COVID-19 patients?** Dexamethasone should be reserved for patients who need it most. It should not be stockpiled. In studies, dexamethasone provided NO improvement for patients with MILD symptoms. Dexamethasone is a corticosteroid used for its anti-inflammatory and immunosuppressive effects. For some COVID-19 patients on ventilators, a daily 6 mg dose of dexamethasone for 10 days improved their health. Therefore, this medication is recommended only for patients with severe COVID-19 in critical condition. Others may have adverse effects and complications for taking this medication if they don't have severe symptoms. <https://bit.ly/37ydM7b>



• **Is it true that the COVID-19 vaccine was developed as a way to control the general population either through microchip tracking or nano transducers in our brains.** There is no vaccine "microchip" and the vaccine will not track people or gather personal information into a database. This myth started after comments made by Bill Gates from The Gates Foundation about a digital certificate of vaccine records. The technology he was referencing is not a microchip, has not been implemented in any manner and is not tied to the development, testing or distribution of the COVID-19 vaccine. <https://bit.ly/3ra1XvC>