



FACULTY OF MEDICINE, UNIVERSITY OF COLOMBO

Founded in 1870 as the Colombo Medical School

Vidya Jyothi Prof. Vajira H. W. Dissanayake MBBS, PhD, FNASSL, FIAHSI, FCMA, FRCP (Lond)

Dean, Faculty of Medicine

Senior Professor (Chair), Department of Anatomy, Genetics and Biomedical Informatics

November 13, 2024

Dear Esteemed Friend of Professor O.E.R. Abhayaratne,

Invitation to provide financial support for establishment of an Endowment Fund for the Professor O.E.R. Abhayaratne Research Grant for Public Health

I am writing to invite you to join us in an opportunity to make a lasting impact in the field of community health, while honoring the legacy of a remarkable leader in public health, Professor O.E.R. Abhayaratne.

As the first Professor of Public Health at the Faculty of Medicine, University of Colombo, Professor Abhayaratne founded the Department of Community Medicine in 1949. A distinguished alumnus of Harvard Medical School, where he graduated with Golden Key honors and Cum Laude distinction, he dedicated two decades of his career to the Department before becoming the longest-serving Dean of the Faculty of Medicine. Under his visionary leadership, the Department became a pioneer in policy-relevant public health research aimed at improving health systems and enhancing the well-being of the Sri Lankan population.

Throughout its history the Department of Community Medicine has conducted groundbreaking research addressing critical issues such as enhancing the quality of services provided by Public Health Midwives, reducing the risk of cardiovascular disease, promoting breastfeeding compliance, and tackling teenage pregnancies. The department is now in the process of establishing research endowment funds to overcome the funding restrictions for research posed by the current economic challenges and to enhance its research portfolio.

In recognition of Professor Abhayaratne's extraordinary contributions and to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the Department of Community Medicine, we are pleased to announce the establishment of the Professor O.E.R. Abhayaratne Research Grant for Public Health, awarded annually, and funded through a dedicated endowment fund. This grant aims to perpetuate his legacy by supporting high-

quality, policy-relevant research that addresses pressing community health issues in Sri Lanka and beyond.

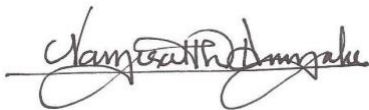
At my request, the endowment fund has been initiated by Professor Abhayaratne's family and will be sustained with contributions from his students, colleagues, well-wishers, and international donors. The grant will be administered through the Health Systems Research Unit of the Department following a rigorous selection process overseen by an independent committee.

We kindly seek your support in advancing public health research through the Professor O.E.R. Abhayaratne Endowment Fund. Your generous donation will have a direct impact on the lives of individuals and communities, ensuring the continuation of the legacy of one of Sri Lanka's most esteemed public health pioneers.

Thank you for considering this unique opportunity to make a lasting difference. Should you require any further information or wish to discuss this initiative, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you,

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Vajira H.W. Dissanayake', written in a cursive style.

Prof. Vajira H.W. Dissanayake

Dean