

# THE SINGAPORE MEDICAL COUNCIL & ITS DISCIPLINARY PROCESS

## WHEN TO FILE A COMPLAINT ?



### THE SINGAPORE MEDICAL COUNCIL

- Operates under the jurisdiction of the Medical Registration Act.
- Provides guidance to doctors on professional standards through the Ethical Code and Ethical Guidelines.

### WHEN TO FILE A COMPLAINT?

A complaint may be filed to:

- Report deficiencies in professional standards; and
- Flag concerns relating to public health and safety.



Complaints require the investment of public resources to investigate. Serious indications to complain to the Singapore Medical Council (SMC) and indications which do not require a complaint to SMC include the following below:



#### COMPLAINTS RELATED TO THE PROFESSIONAL MISCONDUCT OF REGISTERED MEDICAL DOCTORS

For example:

Serious negligence	Grossly inadequate informed consent	Misdiagnosis due to negligence	
Breach of medical confidentiality	Inappropriate treatment	Conduct which brings disrepute to the medical profession	Sexual offences



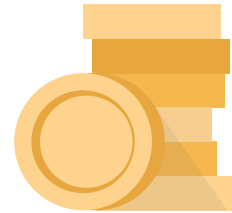
#### COMPLAINTS WHICH MAY BE DISMISSED

For example:

**Unrelated** to professional misconduct or reputation of the medical profession

Frivolous, vexatious, misconceived or lacking in substance

### ARE YOU LOOKING FOR COMPENSATION AND / OR AN APOLOGY?



The Singapore Medical Council's disciplinary process is targeted at ensuring professional and medical standards. It is **unable** to assist you in seeking compensation and/or an apology.

#### YOU MAY CONSIDER



Contacting the doctor / hospital / clinic directly



Mediation

##### WHAT IS MEDIATION?

A neutral third party (a mediator) assists you and the doctor in resolving the dispute.

##### WHY SHOULD I TRY IT?

An opportunity to reach an amicable resolution between parties.

##### IS IT SUITABLE FOR ME?

The following situations may be suitable for mediation:

- If you wish to obtain compensation and/or an apology;
- If your complaint pertains to simple negligence, misunderstanding over charges or treatment plans, or perceived poor attitude of the doctor.

##### HOW DO I APPLY?

Please click [here](#) to find out more about the healthcare mediation scheme offered by the Ministry of Health Holdings.

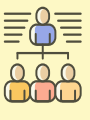
### THE COMPLAINTS COMMITTEES AND DISCIPLINARY TRIBUNALS



Have you exhausted all possible alternatives and filing an official complaint with the Singapore Medical Council is the best option left? Find out what happens after your complaint is filed.



**01** An official complaint is filed with the Singapore Medical Council ("SMC").

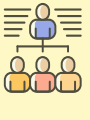


**02** An independent Complaints Committee ("CC"), drawn from a panel appointed by the SMC, is appointed to inquire into the complaint.



At the conclusion of the inquiry, the CC may make one of the following orders:

- Dismiss the complaint
- Order for mediation
- Issue a Letter of Advice to the doctor
- Issue a Letter of Warning to the doctor



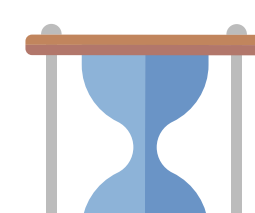
**04** For serious cases, the CC may refer the doctor to a Disciplinary Tribunal ("DT"). An independent DT, which is also drawn from a panel appointed by the SMC, is appointed to conduct a formal inquiry. The DT is also independent of the CC.



At the conclusion of the inquiry, the DT may make one or more of the following orders:

- Censure in writing
- A written undertaking by the doctor to abstain from specific conduct(s)
- Change in doctor's registration status
- Impose conditions/restrictions on doctor's registration
- Financial penalty
- Suspension
- Striking off

### WHY IS IT TAKING SOME TIME FOR MY COMPLAINT TO BE RESOLVED?



#### THESE PROCEDURES TAKE TIME

- Obtain written explanations from respondent doctors
- Obtain statements from witnesses
- Obtain and review medical records
- Obtain expert opinions
- Pending court proceedings, Coroner's Inquiry or police investigations



What if the procedures take a long time and there are imminent public health risks?

An Interim Orders Committee ("IOC") may be convened if there is a **serious threat** to public health and safety and if the allegation is based on **credible evidence**.

Orders that can be given by the IOC includes:

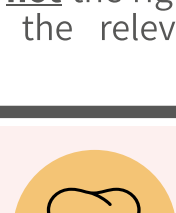
- A voluntary undertaking by the doctor;
- Interim suspension or conditions placed upon the doctor until the disciplinary matter has been dealt with.

### WHAT ABOUT OTHER HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS?

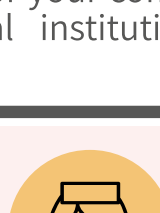


If you are not complaining against a **registered medical doctor**, the Singapore Medical Council is **not** the right avenue for your complaint. You may wish to contact the relevant medical institutions or professional boards below.

#### CLICK ON THE RELEVANT AVENUES



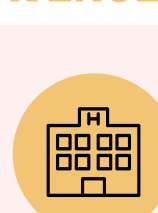
DENTISTS



NURSES



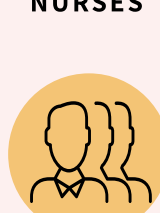
TRADITIONAL CHINESE MEDICINE PRACTITIONERS



MEDICAL INSTITUTIONS



PHARMACISTS



ALLIED HEALTH PROFESSIONALS



OPTOMETRISTS & OPTICIANS

### FOR MORE DETAILS

Kindly refer to this detailed [information sheet](#) and [FAQs](#).

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