



SINGAPORE MEDICAL COUNCIL

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PRESS RELEASE

DISCIPLINARY INQUIRY FOR DR NG CHEE KEONG

1. A Disciplinary Committee ("DC") Inquiry ("Inquiry") was held on 10 June 2011 for Dr Ng Chee Keong ("Dr Ng"), age 43 years, who was a general practitioner practising at Eunos 5 Clinic located at Block 5 Eunos Crescent #01-2615, Singapore 400005. The inquiry arose from a complaint dated 19 June 2009 to the Singapore Medical Council ("SMC") by the Ministry of Health ("MOH").
2. Dr Ng initially faced 17 charges of professional misconduct for failing to exercise due care in the management of his patients by inappropriately prescribing hypnotics and/or codeine-containing medication either in terms of the amount prescribed or in terms of the duration over which they were prescribed for the patients.
3. The SMC proceeded with 11 of the 17 charges, and Dr Ng pleaded guilty to all 11 charges. The DC accepted Dr Ng's plea of guilt and accordingly found him guilty of the 11 charges.
4. The DC noted that cases of over-prescription of benzodiazepines and/or codeine-containing medication are particularly troubling. Given the rising incidences of such undesirable conduct by medical practitioners, the DC was of the view that this misconduct should be treated seriously to deter any medical practitioners from committing similar acts.
5. In particular, the DC found the extent of Dr Ng's over-prescription to be excessive, irresponsible and potentially dangerous as Dr Ng's prescribing patterns were potentially habit-forming and could cause drug dependence.
6. Taking the evidence and mitigating factors into consideration, the DC ordered that Dr Ng be suspended from practice for a period of **6 months**, be fined **\$10,000** and censured. Dr Ng was also ordered to pay the costs and expenses of and incidental to

these proceedings, including the costs of the solicitors to the SMC and the Legal Assessor. The DC also ordered that the Grounds of Decision be published.

7. The DC did not ask Dr Ng to give an undertaking not to commit this misconduct again as they noted that he had given a prior undertaking in a separate Disciplinary Committee matter that arose from a complaint from the Ministry of Health in February 2008 and was concluded in October 2009, and that the undertaking is still in effect. In that matter, Dr Ng pleaded guilty to and was convicted of 22 charges of professional misconduct related to inappropriate prescription of benzodiazepines and codeine-containing medication to patients. In addition to providing the undertaking, he was fined \$10,000, suspended for a period of 6 months, censured, and ordered to pay the costs and expenses of and incidental to the proceedings, including the cost of the solicitors to the SMC and the Legal Assessor.

8. Dr Ng's current 6-month suspension took effect on 11 July 2011.

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