



## **SINGAPORE MEDICAL COUNCIL**

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### **PRESS RELEASE**

#### **DISCIPLINARY INQUIRY FOR DR PHAN OI PENG**

1. A Disciplinary Committee ("DC") Inquiry ("Inquiry") was held on 23 May 2011 for Dr Phan Oi Peng ("Dr Phan"), age 66 years, a general practitioner practising at The People's Clinic located at Blk 145, #01-161, Teck Whye Avenue, Singapore 680145. The inquiry arose from a complaint dated 8 October 2009 to the Singapore Medical Council ("SMC") by the Ministry of Health ("MOH").
2. Dr Phan initially faced 25 charges of professional misconduct under the Medical Registration Act for failing to exercise due care in the management of her patients with benzodiazepines, and/or medication containing codeine.
3. The substance of the charges against Dr Phan is that she failed to exercise due care in the management of her 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.
4. The SMC proceeded with 19 of the 25 charges, and Dr Phan pleaded guilty to these 19 charges.
5. While the DC was aware that the charges against Dr Phan consisted of inappropriate prescription and no other misconduct, the DC was of the view that inappropriate prescription is a serious misconduct in itself. This is because the long-term consumption of hypnotics may lead to the development of drug dependence and tolerance by patients. Therefore, the DC stated that it is

incumbent on all medical practitioners to be apprised of the current medical standards and prescribing practice, in the interests of their patients.

6. The DC also noted with concern Dr Phan's serious breach of the Ministry of Health's guidelines in view of the several instances of concurrent prescription of different types of cough medication and/or different types of hypnotic medication at the same consultation. Accordingly, the DC was of the view that such a breach warranted a substantial punishment.
7. Taking the evidence and mitigating factors into consideration, the DC ordered that Dr Phan be suspended from practice for **3 months**, be fined **\$3,000** and censured. The DC also ordered that Dr Phan provide a written undertaking to the SMC that she will not engage in the conduct complained of, or any similar conduct. Dr Phan was also ordered to pay the costs and expenses of and incidental to these proceedings, including the costs of the counsel to the SMC and the Legal Assessor. The DC also ordered that the Grounds of Decision be published.
8. Dr Phan's 3-months suspension took effect on 23 June 2011.

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