



SINGAPORE MEDICAL COUNCIL

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PRESS STATEMENT

SMC HAS IN PLACE SAFEGUARDS TO PROTECT PATIENTS OF DOCTORS BEING INVESTIGATED FOR SEXUAL OFFENCES

1. We refer to the article, "Disciplinary watchdog for doctors must do better", published in the Straits Times, A17 on 16 April 2020. The Singapore Medical Council (SMC) wishes to clarify several points raised in the article.
2. The protection of patients is SMC's utmost priority. The SMC has a standing policy to put in place safeguards to protect patients of doctors being investigated for sexual offences. Of the seven cases pertaining to sexual offences mentioned in the ST article, three have been concluded and four are ongoing. In the four that are ongoing, the SMC has taken precautionary measures to protect the patients.
3. In relation to Dr Chan Heng Nieng and Dr Julian Ong Kian Peng, the SMC Complaints Committee is already investigating a complaint made against both doctors, contrary to the ST article which reported that no complaint has been filed against Dr Ong.
4. When the judgment from the defamation suit was brought to the SMC's attention in April 2020, the SMC had acted immediately to secure signed undertakings from both Dr Chan and Dr Ong to refrain from contacting female patients for purposes outside the scope of their medical practice, pending the completion of the disciplinary process against them.
5. The SMC continues to work closely with the Ministry of Health (MOH) and medical professional bodies to implement the recommendations made by the MOH Workgroup to improve its disciplinary processes and to minimise delays in dealing with complaints.

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