

An overview of the Interim Orders Committee Protecting Members of the Public

Q1. What is an Interim Order (IO)?

▶ An IO serves to protect members of the public and the public interest prior to the conclusion of substantive disciplinary proceedings against a registered medical practitioner. An IO is distinct from the sentence that will be meted out if the registered medical practitioner is referred to a Disciplinary Tribunal (DT) and is found guilty of a disciplinary offence.

Q2. What is an Interim Order Committee (IOC)?

▶ The Singapore Medical Council ("SMC") may appoint one or more committees each comprising 3 of its members to form the IOC, called for the purposes of the Medical Registration Act 1997 ("MRA"). The IOC serves to inquire into any matter referred by the SMC and may be appointed in connection with one or more matters or for a fixed period of time.

Q3. What is the maximum term of suspension in an Interim Order?

▶ The maximum term of suspension that an IOC can order under MRA is 18 months. However, if the disciplinary proceedings against the registered medical practitioner are still ongoing at the end of this 18 months' period, the interim suspension order may be extended until the said proceedings come to a conclusion. Registration of the medical practitioner is conditional on his compliance, during such period not exceeding 18 months as may be specified in the order, with such conditions or restrictions so specified as the IOC thinks fit to impose.

Understanding the SMC's Disciplinary Proceedings

- SMC disciplinary proceedings are distinct from any criminal proceedings against the registered medical practitioner, which will be dealt with by the relevant enforcement agencies (e.g., the Singapore Police Force, in consultation with the Attorney-General's Chambers).
- Sentences in disciplinary proceedings are meted out by DTs which are appointed under the MRA, and not by SMC. In determining the appropriate sentence in a given case, DTs will consider the harm caused by the doctor's conduct and his culpability, with reference to the range of sentences provided for under the MRA and the orders meted out in precedent cases.
- For more information, you may wish to refer to the [“Sentencing Guidelines for Singapore Medical Council Disciplinary Tribunals”](#), which were developed in conjunction with the courts, medical professionals, and legal practitioners, for more information on sentencing in the medical disciplinary context.

