

# Emotional Support Programme

## Support for Doctors Facing Disciplinary Proceedings

In 2019, the Ministry of Health Workgroup to Review the Taking of Informed Consent and SMC Disciplinary Process (“**the Workgroup**”) recommended that a support scheme be developed to help doctors who are facing disciplinary inquiries to better understand the disciplinary processes and allay their anxieties.

The Academy of Medicine Singapore, the College of Family Physicians Singapore and the Singapore Medical Association (the professional bodies or “PBs”) came together to implement the support service for doctors who are facing SMC’s disciplinary processes. The support service is independent of SMC and is administered by the PBs. Doctors do not need to be a member of a PB to request the service. This service was rolled out on 1 June 2022. The announcement in the SMC website can be viewed at this [link](#).

### How the Support Programme Works

The requesting doctor will be informed by SMC when he receives the complaint about this support service. If he decides to seek help, he will be matched by the PB he contacts to a volunteer support doctor. The role of the support doctor is to provide emotional support as well as general guidance on the disciplinary process. The support doctor does not provide medical, legal or case-specific advice. The support service is strictly confidential between the support doctor and requesting doctor.

Doctors who wish to seek other types of support may wish to contact the appropriate professionals, such as psychiatrists, psychologists or counsellors, or organisations that offer such services, and are encouraged to do so for their wellbeing. For legal support they will have to seek their insurance or indemnity provider or a solicitor.

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| <p><b>Who we are</b></p> <p>The three medical Professional Bodies (PBs) – the Academy of Medicine, Singapore (AMS), College of Family Physicians Singapore (CFPS) and Singapore Medical Association (SMA) have come together to implement a doctor support service to provide emotional support to you and to help you manage your anxieties and fears. This is a confidential service and all that transpires is confidential between you and the supporting doctor.</p> <p>Volunteers who participate in providing this support service are fellow doctors who would be able to provide a listening ear and collegial support. They are also knowledgeable about the Singapore Medical Council’s (SMC) disciplinary system and would be able to provide appropriate support as you navigate the various stages of complaint, investigation, and outcome of the process.</p> |    | <p><b>Doctor Support Service</b></p> <p>Are you facing a complaint or disciplinary proceedings? A support service for doctors set up by AMS, CFPS and SMA can help.</p> <p>Find us at</p> <p><b>AMS</b><br/>6593 7870<br/>drsupport@ams.edu.sg</p> <p><b>CFPS</b><br/>6223 0606<br/>contact@cfps.org.sg</p> <p><b>SMA</b><br/>6223 1264<br/>sma@sma.org.sg</p> | <p>In the course of a doctor’s practice, there are times and instances where the outcome of a treatment or a consultation may lead to complaints against the doctor. The majority of complaints do not result in formal disciplinary proceedings, with most leading to Complaints Committees issuing letters of advice. These letters serve to guide doctors on where their practice has fallen short and/or how they may improve their practice.</p> <p>However, we understand that being informed of a complaint against one’s practice can be a difficult and stressful experience. This is compounded by the fact that the disciplinary process may take some time to reach a conclusion. Some doctors may even keep this event to themselves and not confide with family, friends or colleagues about their anxieties and worries.</p> | <p><b>What support is provided?</b></p> <p>The supporting doctor from the professional bodies is an experienced member who fully understands the Singapore Medical Council’s (SMC) disciplinary process.</p> <p>Areas where the supporting doctor may advise you include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• what to expect from the disciplinary process;</li> <li>• how to deal with undue stress; and</li> <li>• guidance on access to legal advice and insurance support.</li> </ul> <p>Please note that the supporting doctor is unable to provide you with legal advice or guidance regarding your case or how you should respond to the complaint. The supporting doctor is also not authorised to speak for the SMC, or any party involved in the inquiry of your complaint. Your legal counsel is the appropriate party to advise you on these matters.</p> | <p><b>Who can use this service?</b></p> <p>All doctors who are facing a complaint can access our support service. The support is available from the time the doctor receives the notice of complaint until the final conclusion of the inquiry into the complaint.</p> <p><b>The service is confidential</b></p> <p>The professional bodies will obtain the necessary information such as names, emails, and phone numbers to facilitate communication between you and the supporting doctor. Any information shared is kept confidential between parties.</p>  |
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