

President's Message



Dear Colleagues,

Season's greetings to all.

Thank you for serving in the battle front against COVID-19 since the start of this year. With less than a month left in 2020, it appears that we have finally flattened the curve and are on the verge of winning this hard fought battle on our shore. We have all worked very hard to come this far but we cannot celebrate just yet.

Our economy is in dire need to be rejuvenated, beyond protecting jobs and saving jobs. As a matter of fact, Singapore has already created thousands of new jobs to re-employ workers that were laid off during this pandemic. We must recognise that there are trade-offs between opening up the economy and starting business as usual soonest possible and concurrently containing the virus from affecting the population. It is a wicked problem. And we must be ready for it.

The theme, "Protecting Lives, Saving Livelihoods" has been announced and stated countless times in this year's extraordinary budget. The government, through an unprecedented budget to manage the COVID-19 pandemic will weather us through this storm.

The role of the SMC is no different. We are here to not only save lives but also protect livelihoods.

In maintaining high professional standards of practice, we save lives. When there are cases of both harm and good, we need to ensure that the good we do outweigh the harm. So, when the outcome is neither desired nor foreseen, the SMC receives complaints from those we serve. As the regulatory body for doctors, SMC through the Medical Registration Act (which has been amended and passed in Parliament recently in October), must decide on the merits of such complaints and deal with them effectively, efficiently and fairly. This is one reason for me to call upon colleagues to step forth and serve on the various committees including the Disciplinary Tribunal to preserve the ethos of the medical profession.

In doing so, doctors will be saving the livelihoods of their patients by returning them to good health and protecting the livelihoods of their fellow doctors through swift justice.

This is a clarion call for doctors to serve in the SMC. There is no self-regulation when one does not step forward to serve. With the emphasis on timeliness, the respondent should quickly reply so that the Complaints Committee can quickly deliberate. Expert witnesses should expediate submission of their reports. Doctors must find time and make time if this system were to run smoothly. I am heartened that SMC has received a handful of volunteers, both young and the experienced since my last message to the fraternity of 15,000 registered doctors and I hope to receive more.

We all hope 2021 will be much better for all. Stay safe.

Professor Chee Yam Cheng
President