

SMC Newsletter



June 2021

16th Edition

In this edition —

Review of the Ethical Code and Ethical Guidelines and Handbook on Medical Ethics



Contents

3

President's
Message

4

Review of the Ethical
Code and Ethical
Guidelines and
Handbook on
Medical Ethics

6

Supervisors Trained
under SMC's
Supervisory
Framework

7

SMC Physician's
Pledge Affirmation
Ceremony 2021

8

Practising Certificate
Renewal 2021

8

Update on SMC

President's Message



Dear Colleagues,

My heartfelt thanks to each of you for serving in the frontline against the COVID-19 pandemic. In the blink of an eye, we have been battling this pandemic for almost 18 months. We moved into Phase 3 Safe Re-opening late last year and we now find ourselves back in Phase 3 Heightened Alert status. The recent resurgence of unlinked community cases in Singapore is a stark reminder that we are not out of the woods and we still cannot afford to let our guard down. We cannot predict how long this battle with COVID-19 will last and we have to start planning that COVID-19 will be endemic. As medical practitioners, we can lead the way, show by example and develop a new normal in the way we deliver healthcare services that continue to protect the health and safety of patients and maintain a high standard of care.

During this COVID-19 pandemic, the Council has continued with its regulatory reviews and engagement with medical practitioners. Over the past months, we have been preparing for the implementation of the changes to the Medical Registration Act (MRA), as well as to update the

SMC Ethical Code and Ethical Guidelines (ECEG) and Handbook on Medical Ethics (HME) which were last revised in 2016.

Consultation exercises on the ECEG and HME were held since end 2020 to gather feedback from fellow colleagues and representatives from the medical professional bodies as well as from non-medical professionals to look into the areas for improvements and refinements. In this edition of the SMC newsletter, we have provided an update of the consultation sessions and outreach to the various sectors of the medical profession. We look forward to further improvements and clarity to be made to the ECEG and HME. If you have any further thoughts and suggestions, it is not too late to share them with SMC. We have also included an update on our inaugural Supervisory Framework 'Train-the-Trainer' workshops for SMC-approved supervisors that were held in July 2020. These workshops aimed to better guide the supervisors in their assessments of conditionally registered doctors under supervision; that they are able to practise independently and safely when they eventually convert to full registration.

It is the SMC's hope that every doctor continues to remember their call to medicine. It is without a doubt that the clinical work is tough, at times unappreciated but rewarding always. We must at all times place our patients' interests before our own. As we look ahead to the future in a new normal, we must remember the calling to serve our patients well.

Best wishes and always stay safe.

Professor Chee Yam Cheng
President

Review of the Ethical Code And Ethical Guidelines and Handbook on Medical Ethics

It has been 5 years since the current edition was published in 2016 and the SMC noted that it was timely to update the Ethical Code and Ethical Guidelines (ECEG) and Handbook on Medical Ethics (HME) and to provide guidance to the medical profession on new and emerging ethical issues. On 23 Oct 2020, the SMC appointed a 9-member Working Committee to undertake a review of the ECEG and HME. The composition of the Working Committee with representation from both the private and public sectors comprised Council and non-Council members who are senior medical practitioners as follows:

Members of the Working Committee:

Dr Wong Chiang Yin – Chairman
Prof Lee Eng Hin – Deputy Chairman
A/Prof Chin Jing Jih
Dr Ho Kok Sun
A/Prof Roy Joseph
A/Prof Rathi Mahendran
Prof Lynette Shek
Dr Subramaniam Surajkumar
Dr Tay Ee Guan

On 22 Dec 2020, the Working Committee sent an email invitation to all registered medical practitioners in Singapore to provide their feedback on the ECEG and HME via an online



feedback form. To allow more time and opportunity for all medical practitioners to contribute to the review, the initial deadline for submission of feedback by 12 Jan 2021 was subsequently extended to 31 Mar 2021. Over the 3-month period, the Working Committee received feedback from 226 medical practitioners.

Besides the online feedback form, the Working Committee also conducted online sessions via Zoom to personally meet medical practitioners from healthcare institutions and professional bodies representing both the public and private sectors, and professional and lay members from the SMC Complaints Panel and Disciplinary Tribunal Panel.



A total of 7 feedback sessions were held from Jan 2021 to Mar 2021 of which 6 were co-hosted with leaders from the professional bodies and healthcare clusters. A total of 181 attendees from the Singapore Medical Association, Academy of Medicine Singapore, College of Family Physicians Singapore, National Healthcare Group, National University Health System, SingHealth Services, and members of the SMC Complaints Panel and Disciplinary Tribunal Panel participated in the Zoom sessions.

The Working Committee found the thought-provoking and frank discussions most valuable. Difficult issues pertaining to new and emerging challenges faced by medical practitioners were surfaced, which needed to be addressed in the next edition of the ECEG and HME.

The Working Committee would like to express its heartfelt thanks and gratitude to everyone who took time from their busy schedules to provide their feedback via the online feedback form and Zoom sessions over the past few months.

All the feedback gathered will be considered by the Working Committee in its work on the drafting of the coming edition of the ECEG and HME. Its immediate priority is to align the ECEG and HME sections on the standard of care in the provision of medical advice with the legislative amendments effected by the Civil Law (Amendment) Bill.

Further inputs will be sought from the medical profession again in due course.

Supervisors Trained Under SMC's Supervisory Framework

The SMC's Supervisory Framework ensures that international medical graduates (IMGs) registered as conditionally registered (C-reg) or temporarily registered (T-reg) doctors in Singapore receive direct and timely supervision by supervisors who are fully registered (F-reg) senior doctors at work.

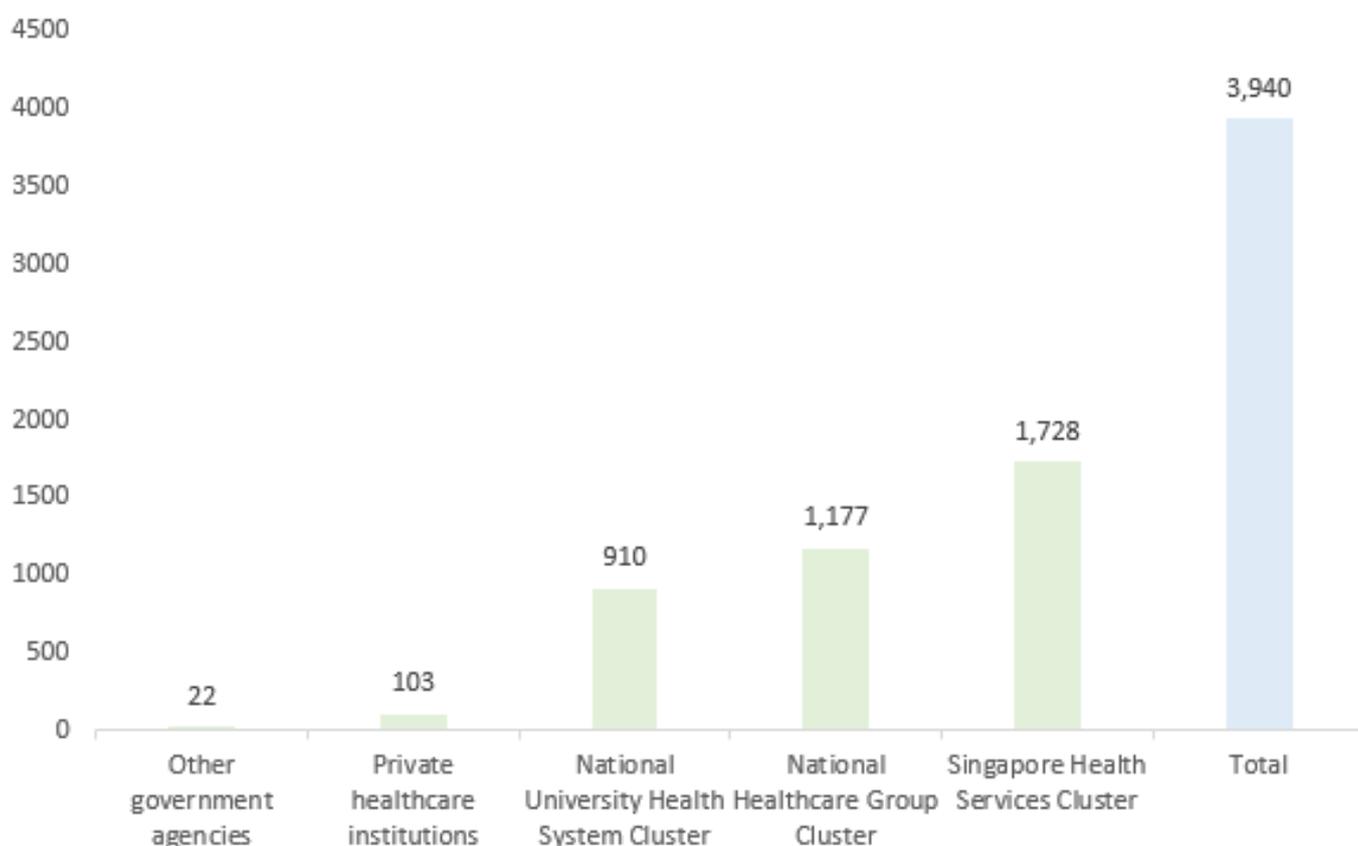
The [SMC Newsletter December 2020](#) reported the inaugural Supervisory Framework 'Train-the-Trainer' workshop for SMC-approved supervisors in July 2020 held online via Zoom. As of 31 May 2021, a total of 3,940 supervisors were trained under the SMC's Supervisory Framework.

The training has helped supervisors understand SMC's Supervisory Framework and better assess C-reg and T-reg doctors. Most doctors under supervised practice (supervisees) have done well

in the assessments. However, for those supervisees who did not perform satisfactorily, there is a review process and remediation using the performance improvement plan.

Each assessment report (AR) of the supervisee, which is submitted online via the Professional Registration System, is signed off by the supervisor, Head of Department and Chairman, Medical Board or Medical Director or equivalent in the institution. SMC reviews all completed ARs and accompanying multi-rater assessments of the supervisee, if any. The Supervisory Framework ensures that the doctors under supervision are safe for medical practice in our healthcare institutions or ready to be fully registered in Singapore.

Table 1: Supervisors Trained Under the SMC's Supervisory Framework as at 31 May 2021



SMC Physician's Pledge Affirmation Ceremony 2021 (27 February 2021)



Doctors affirming the SMC Physician's Pledge via Zoom video conferencing



Professor
Chee Yam Cheng
President, SMC

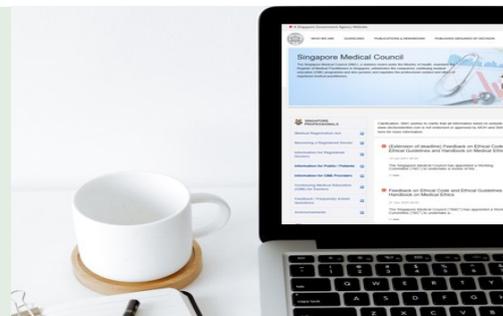
"You have been well trained and empowered to use medical science to inform and educate patients and their relatives about this pandemic and its ongoing medical advances."

"Having head knowledge is not enough, the doctor must also have a compassionate heart and be honest in their practice. If a doctor lacks such attributes, he cannot be entrusted with the care of patients."

"Learning about ethics and professionalism never ends. There are good role models to follow and bad ones to avoid. Take ownership of your education in ethics and professionalism; set aside time and take the effort to read and learn so that you are grounded in a compassionate and ethical practice."

"There is no self-regulation when doctors do not step forward to serve. Some of you may be called into this important commitment and when that day comes, we hope that you will take it upon yourself to do this duty, like the generations of doctors before you who have set a good example and are your role models."

Practising Certificate Renewal 2021



For Who?

Fully and conditionally registered doctors whose **Practising Certificates (PCs)** are **expiring on 31 December 2021**, can submit their application from 2 September 2021.

1

3 How to Renew?

Doctors need to **log into the Professional Registration System (PRS)** on the SMC website with their Singpass **at least one month before** their PC expires to apply for a renewal.

Late application fee of \$80 is chargeable for applications submitted in the month of December 2021.

PC Renewal Criteria

Obtained **sufficient Continuing Medical Education (CME) points** within the qualifying period

Must not have any outstanding fine for not voting in previous SMC's Elections (only applicable for fully registered doctors)

2

4 Reminder

Doctors are reminded to log into the PRS to **update their contact details** such as **email addresses, handphone numbers** and **employment information** so as not to miss any important notifications from SMC.

Update on SMC

The SMC welcomes newly re-appointed Council member Clinical A/Prof Tan Su-Ming, as well as newly appointed Council member Adj A/Prof Lee Cheng. They will serve in the Medical Council for a 3-year term, with effect from 1 June 2021. SMC looks forward to the contributions of our newly appointed members.



Clinical A/Prof Tan Su-Ming
Senior Consultant
Head of Division of Breast Surgery
Changi General Hospital



Adj A/Prof Lee Cheng
Clinical Director,
IMH Office of Population Health
Programme
Director, National Addictions
Management Service
Institute of Mental Health



A/Prof Rathi Mahendran
Senior Consultant Psychiatrist
Department of
Psychological Medicine
National University Hospital

SMC would also like to extend a word of appreciation to A/Prof Rathi Mahendran who had completed her term of office as a Council member on 31 May 2021. It was a pleasure for the Council to work with A/Prof Rathi. We take this opportunity to thank her and wish her the very best for the years ahead.

**For feedback and comments,
contact SMC at:**



SMC@spb.gov.sg



www.smc.gov.sg

SMC Newsletter Editorial Committee

A/Prof Chew Suok Kai — Chairman
A/Prof Chen Fun Gee
Dr Ho Kok Sun
Dr Lau Hong Choon
Dr Subramaniam Surajkumar
A/Prof Tan Beng Hoi Agnes

Disclaimer

Comments and opinions made by individuals and parties who have contributed to or interviewed by the SMC Newsletter are solely those of the authors and contributors and do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the SMC. While every effort is made to ensure accuracy, SMC bears no responsibility or liability in any way for the content, information, photographs, illustrations and other material in this publication. All material remains copyright of the SMC and no reproduction is permitted without written authorisation.