

SMC President's Message



*D*ear colleagues,

Season's greetings as we draw to the close of the year.

Ethical Practice

The Singapore Medical Council (SMC) initiated the "Series in Professional Ethics" starting from the last edition of the SMC Newsletter. In this issue, we look at the prescription of benzodiazepines, hypnotics, and codeine containing cough mixtures. Improper prescriptions of such addictive drugs can lead to misuse, abuse and dependence. SMC's disciplinary tribunals have through the years convicted and sentenced a number of doctors who prescribed such drugs inappropriately. This article by Family Physician, Dr S Suraj Kumar, is intended to increase awareness of inappropriate prescription by highlighting the clinical guidelines that every doctor needs to know to comply with the prescribing of such medications.

Compulsory CME on Medical Ethics

Continuing Medical Education on Medical Ethics will be made compulsory for the renewal of Practising Certificates (PC) from 2026. This was one of the recommendations by the MOH's Workgroup to review the taking of Informed Consent and SMC Disciplinary Process, to enable doctors to be made aware and updated on ethical issues and practice. The Medical Ethics curriculum which encompasses four basic core topics i.e. 1) Professionalism 2) Ethics 3) Informed Consent and Medical Decision Making and 4) Medical Records, Privacy and Confidentiality will be rolled out progressively by the three medical Professional Bodies i.e. Academy of Medicine, Singapore (AMS), College of Family Physicians Singapore (CFPS) and Singapore Medical Association (SMA) from next year. Doctors must obtain the minimum CME core points in these programmes in order to renew their Practising Certificate (PC).

Physician's Pledge Affirmation Ceremony

The SMC held its second Physician's Pledge Affirmation Ceremony for 2022 virtually on 24 September 2022, attended by more than 480 provisionally and conditionally registered doctors. The Pledge is a significant event to remind doctors of the importance of their role in society and responsibilities to their patients. SMC was honoured to have Dr Janil Puthuchery, Senior Minister of State for Health as the Guest-of-Honour, and members of the Medical Council, invited guests from the medical Professional Bodies, the medical schools in Singapore, and Chairmen of Medical Boards of hospitals.

Council Members

On behalf of the Council, I congratulate the elected and re-elected Council members this year, namely Dr Chuang Wei Ping, Dr Ho Kok Sun, Dr Lee Yee Mun, Dr Leong Choon Kit and Dr Lim Ah Leng. The following were also appointed or re-appointed to the Council by the Minister of Health this year - Prof Lim Chien Wei John, Prof Pang Weng Sun, Prof Lynette Shek Pei-Chi, A/Prof Tan Beng Hoi Agnes, Prof Tan Puay Hoon, Adj A/Prof Tan Tze Lee, Dr Tan Yia Swam and Prof Teo Eng Kiong.

Under the amended Medical Registration Act, we have for the first time the appointment of the Master of the Academy, and the Presidents of the College of Family Physicians Singapore and the Singapore Medical Association in the Council. We welcome all the elected and appointed Council members. I take this opportunity to deeply appreciate the services of Prof Venkataraman Anantharaman and A/Prof Chew Suok Kai, who have completed a number of terms in the Medical Council. They have contributed greatly to the work of the Council and its Committees and the decisions of the Council over the years.

Renewal of PC

Lastly, we would like to remind doctors who are due to renew their PC by the end of this year to do so early and at the same time update your contact details if so needed to continue to receive notifications, circulars and messages from the SMC.

As the year comes to a close, we wish you a blessed new year ahead.

Professor Chee Yam Cheng
President