



Speech by Guest of Honour Dr Janil Puthucheary

Senior Minister of State for Health

It is my privilege to join you today for the Physician's Pledge Affirmation Ceremony. The pledge is an important milestone before you receive full registration as a medical doctor in Singapore. I echo the President's message that this may be one of the most important afternoons in your life.

Upholding professionalism even as we emerge from the pandemic

Many of you present today have stood on the frontlines of the pandemic over the last three years. You have worked hand in hand with other healthcare professionals and care staff to deliver the best possible care for your patients. Those were difficult times, but you persevered, despite the challenges and stressful conditions. This is a testament of your professionalism and dedication. You have placed the welfare and care of patients at the topmost of your minds and kept faith with your pledge to "dedicate your lives to the service of humanity".

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The solemn oath you are about to undertake, affirms this dedication and the duties and responsibilities towards our patients, colleagues and all those who have put their trust in us. It is also your commitment to uphold the high professional and ethical standards expected of the medical profession. We should never take for granted the trust and confidence the public has placed in



the medical profession which has been painstakingly built up over the years. As a profession, we should continue to uphold high professional standards in three key areas.

First, we must prevent lapses in our professional standards which may arise in our clinical practice, such as failure to exercise a duty of care to our patients, poor clinical decision making that does not take into account our patients' best interest, or failing to maintain currency in our clinical knowledge and prescribing non-evidence based clinical treatments.



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We must behave with probity and integrity, and guard against personal indiscretion and other issues which may interfere with our professional standards. Our fitness to practise is as important as our physical and mental fitness.

Second, the SMC's Ethical Code and Ethical Guidelines provides the guiding principles for every doctor, at every stage of their medical career. It is imperative for doctors to read and familiarise ourselves with these guidelines which are part of the important reading materials hosted on the website of the Singapore Medical Council.

Third, self-regulation is a privilege, and we need to uphold the trust the public has placed on us by ensuring effective self-regulation. It is our hope that every cohort of doctors will produce the few who will step forward in enabling good self-regulation.



On this note, I wish to honour and thank the doctors, legal professionals and laypersons who have committed themselves to serve in the SMC Complaints Panel, alongside the Disciplinary Tribunals and the newly set up Disciplinary Commission, which work together to ensure effective self-regulation. To make judgements according to the Ethical Code and Ethical Guidelines requires integrity, commitment, and wisdom, and I would like to take this opportunity to recognise the important work that is done by these individuals.

Care for Juniors

Even as we uphold the high professional standards expected of our profession, the strains of the pandemic have also highlighted the challenges faced by junior doctors. The Ministry of Health (MOH) is actively studying these issues, including areas such as duty hours, career pathways, and work processes. We are currently engaging doctors across all ranks on improvements that can be made to offer better support to junior doctors. At the same time, we are also working with educators and professional bodies to ensure that changes do not negatively impact training outcomes. More importantly, we should not forget that the medical fraternity has a responsibility to take care of their juniors, and take this duty seriously as a core undertaking of the profession.



Healthier SG

As we move towards normalcy, it is timely for us to rethink what healthcare should look like in a post-COVID world, taking the lessons learnt from our pandemic response while remaining committed to our vision of a healthier nation. The Healthier SG movement is crucial to this vision, and as doctors, you play a significant role in this. Many of you will be the first point of contact in caring for Singaporeans. You will thus play a pivotal role in helping Singaporeans take steps towards better health, shape healthy behaviours, as well as anchor care and support for Singaporeans in their homes and communities. I would like to encourage all of you to contribute to this movement in one way or another, where together we can be part of this movement for a healthier Singapore.



Closing Remarks

In closing, this ceremony marks a milestone in your journey as a doctor. I congratulate you and my hope for you is that you maintain a lifelong steadfastness in your dedication and commitment to your patients. Let me use this opportunity to wish you all the best as you continue to develop professionally. I wish you success, and a fulfilling life and career in the years ahead.

Thank you.