

SMC President's Message



*D*ear colleagues,

Season's greetings as we draw near to the end of 2023 and welcome the new year..



Minister's Address at the Pledge Ceremony

At our second SMC Physician's Pledge Affirmation Ceremony in September this year, 526 doctors took the Pledge. We thank Mr Masagos Zulkifli, Minister for Social and Family Development and Second Minister for Health for delivering his address to the doctors. In his address, he noted that the demographics and needs of society are changing and the medical fields are constantly evolving. As doctors, we should pursue continuing medical education meaningfully to help us keep abreast of the latest knowledge for our practice.

Minister Masagos also announced that to sustain the quality of postgraduate medical education in Singapore, MOH has developed Singapore's own accreditation framework called the Accreditation of Postgraduate Medical Education Singapore (APMES) to accredit postgraduate medical training programmes. Together with the development of local standards, these moves will further contextualise clinical training and ensure that postgraduate medical training programmes meet our high standards, training doctors to deliver quality healthcare for Singaporeans.

As we transition to APMES, MOH is also introducing competency-based medical education through the implementation of Entrustable Professional Activities or EPAs. These EPAs provide clear definitions of competencies that medical professionals must achieve at different stages of their training and the corresponding assessments are carefully selected for alignment to training outcomes. The aim is to foster a more learner-centred environment and facilitate timely feedback, ultimately supporting the development of trainees into family physicians, hospital clinicians and specialists.

SMC's Response to the Straits Times Commentary

SMC's response to a commentary in the Straits Times in October 2023, "*Complaints against docs still take years to address, despite moves to speed things up*" is also published on our website. Complaints filed after 1 July 2022 are subject to the new processes under the amended Medical Registration Act (MRA).

Following all these measures, 70 per cent of complaints lodged in 2022 were concluded within a year versus 23 per cent in 2018. Of these, more than one-third of the 53 complaints received last year were concluded by the Inquiry Committees (ICs) within two months.

Some disciplinary inquiries take longer to conclude as the cases are more complex and may require input from expert witnesses. Other cases are subject to the completion of ongoing court proceedings, coroner's inquiries or police investigations before the disciplinary inquiries can continue. Procedural challenges and applications by respondent doctors to extend the time allocated to submit their defence further introduce delays to disciplinary proceedings

Series in Professional Ethics – Overview of Interim Orders Committee and Interim Orders

In the August 2022 edition of the SMC Newsletter, we shared information on Interim Orders (IOs) and the Interim Orders Committee (IOC). An IO serves to protect members of the public and the public interest prior to the conclusion of substantive disciplinary proceedings against a registered medical practitioner. In this issue, we provide further clarifications on the IOs and the IOC.

PC Renewal

We note that some doctors had encountered issues for the Practising Certificate (PC) renewal in October 2023. These issues have been rectified and we apologise for any inconvenience caused.

SMC's Announcements

Please refer to SMC's latest announcements online, to keep abreast of the latest publications and news in SMC.

On behalf of the Council, I would like to wish all colleagues a happy and healthy new year ahead.

Professor Chee Yam Cheng
President

