

News from SMA Council

By Dr Tham Tat Yean, Honorary Secretary

1. APPOINTMENT OF A PROVISIONAL LIQUIDATOR TO UMP

Arising out of the appointment of a Provisional Liquidator to the UNITED Medical Protection Limited (UMP), and in order to address and reduce the anxiety of current UMP Members, the SMA Council has been actively exploring alternative coverage as well as retrospective cover (for the period Members were insured under UMP) for UMP Members with other medical defence providers. The SMA Council will continue to post updates to UMP Members by mail and on the SMA website <http://www.sma.org.sg>

2. AUTOCLAVE EXPLOSION INCIDENT

The Occupational Safety Department (OSD) of the Ministry of Manpower has informed us that in January 2002, the door of a tabletop autoclave flew open during the sterilising of medical instruments in a medical clinic in Jurong East. The impact caused the autoclave to fall from the bench onto the floor. Luckily no one was injured in the incident.

More details of the incident and how to prevent such incidents can be viewed at <http://www.gov.sg/mom/wpeaw/isfile/pdf/AutoclaveExplosionIncident.pdf>

The OSD has launched a free subscription service whereby subscribers would be informed via email of up-to-date safety circulars, new or amended laws, news releases, forthcoming OSH seminars/workshops/courses, among others. To subscribe, visit the OSD website at <http://www.gov.sg/mom/wpeaw/indusaf/is.htm>

3. ISSUE OF RECEIPTS TO PATIENTS

The SMA Council would like to advise Members that it is good practice management to issue receipts for the sake of transparency and accountability. The clinic is also obliged to issue receipts whenever the patients request for them and patients have every right to request for receipts upon payment.

4. DOCTORS OWNING SHARES IN COMMERCIAL COMPANIES DEALING IN STORAGE OF CORD BLOOD

The Singapore Medical Council (SMC) has requested us to inform doctors that the issue of obstetricians or other doctors owning shares in commercial companies dealing in storage of cord blood, is covered fully by Section 4.6 of the SMC Ethical Code and Ethical Guidelines. Doctors owning shares in such companies should not exert undue influence on patients to use the services. They should disclose their interest whenever counselling patients about storing cord blood. The objectivity of these doctors' recommendations to patients should not be affected by their investments in these companies.

The SMC has also advised that the issue of whether doctors can be paid a fee for drawing cord blood is exactly the same as the above, albeit on a smaller scale. This is not really a "professional fee" as no clinical service is being rendered. Where a doctor who recommends the use of any commercial company dealing in storage of cord blood, is also the same doctor who draws the specimen for a fee paid by the company, whether or not that doctor is also an investor in the company, it is necessary for that doctor to explicitly inform the patient that he gains a fee from the drawing of the specimen.

The SMC Ethics Committee feels that the only possible ethical problem occurs if the cord blood is "sold" to a third party. This would be akin to selling blood or body parts which is not allowable.

5. LONG SERVICE AWARDS

In appreciation of their valuable contributions and services to the SMA, Long Service Awards were presented to the following Council/Committee members and Secretariat staff during the SMA Annual Dinner held on 27 April at the Shangri-la Hotel:

- i. Dr Lee Pheng Soon (10 years)
- ii. Dr Lim Teck Beng (10 years)
- iii. A/Prof Sonny Wang Yee Tang (10 years)
- iv. Mrs Emily Ong (20 years)
- v. Ms Angeline Teoh (5 years) ■

43RD SMA COUNCIL - 2002/2003 STANDING COMMITTEES (The President and Honorary Secretary are ex-officios of every Committee.)

I. ADMINISTRATION

1. Administration
Chairman: Dr Tham Tat Yean

II. PUBLICATION

1. Editorial Board – SMJ
Editor: A/Prof C. Rajasoorya
2. Editorial Board – SMA News
Editor: Dr Wong Tien Yin

III. PRACTICE & MEMBERSHIP SERVICES GROUP

1. Casemix & Guideline on Fees
Chairman: Dr Lim Teck Beng
2. Community Health Education & Convention Organising
Chairman: Dr Tan Kok Leong
3. Dinner Organising
Chairman: Dr Ivor Thevathasan
4. Medical Informatics
Chairman: Dr Chong Yeh Woei
5. Membership
Chairman: Dr Foo Chuan Kit
6. Private Practice
Chairman: Dr Chong Yeh Woei
7. Sports & Games
Chairman: (to be appointed)

IV. COMMUNITY SERVICES & EDUCATION GROUP

1. SMA-SNA CPR
Training Programme
Chairman: (to be appointed)
2. SMA Healthcare Course
Chairman: Dr Ivor Thevathasan

V. ETHICS & INDEMNITY

1. Ethics
Chairman: Dr Chin Jing Jih
2. Complaints
Chairman: Dr Lim Teck Beng
3. Professional Indemnity
Chairman: Dr Tan Chue Tin