

News from SMA Council

By Dr Tham Tat Yeap, Honorary Secretary

1. INSTALLATION OF THE 44TH SMA COUNCIL

In view of the postponement of the SMA Annual Dinner to a later date in June or July this year, the installation of the 44th SMA Council took place on Wednesday, 9 April, 9.30 pm at the SMA Conference Room. After a toast to the new Council and the handover ceremony, the 44th SMA Council proceeded to hold its first Council Meeting for the term 2003/2004.

2. CONGRATULATIONS

The SMA Council extends its congratulations and warmest wishes to the following SMA Members:

i. A/Prof Cheong Pak Yeap (SMA Past President, 1996-1999)

The Minister of Education has recently appointed A/Prof Cheong Pak Yeap to the Board of Governors of the Institute of Technical Education (ITE), with effect from 1 April 2003. Since 1990, A/Prof Cheong has chaired as the SMA Representative to a number of ITE Committees that developed the various healthcare certification programmes. His current appointment is a recognition of the work done, and an opportunity to further contribute to the national endeavour in the healthcare and life sciences sectors.

ii. Dr Tan Lai Yong

Dr Tan Lai Yong, Medical Director of Asia Project Grace, will be presented with this year's Singapore International Foundation (SIF) Award (Individual Category). The award commends Singaporeans who are active in promoting the Singapore spirit overseas, acting as unofficial ambassadors. Dr Tan has been in Yunnan, China, for 7 years now, training village doctors there voluntarily.

Previously, the December 2001 and January 2002 issues of the SMA

News had carried articles on Dr Tan's work and experience in Yunnan training doctors, and arranging for medical teams to visit village schools to conduct medical screening and health education. In 2001, the Yunnan provincial government honoured Dr Tan with the "Friendship with Yunnan Award," the local equivalent of a national award.

3. SARS – MASKS FOR CLINICS

SMA continues to obtain 3M N95 masks from the Ministry of Health and 3M for sale to clinics. As the quantities received from these 2 sources continue to be low, we have been rationing ONE box of 20 masks to each clinic for each round of order. Clinics which have placed orders are contacted to collect their masks when their queue number comes up.

In view of the feedback from clinics of their inability to obtain masks, we have been mass emailing and faxing to inform doctors/clinics of the availability of masks. In this respect, **doctors/clinics who have not furnished SMA with their email addresses and fax numbers** may wish to do so as soon as possible.

To help alleviate the shortage of 3M N95 masks, the SMA Council decided to source for other types of N95 masks. The **Draeger N99 Piccola FFP3V masks**, which have a filtration rate of 99% and possibility of confirmed delivery within one week, were found to be suitable. We have been supplying

these masks to clinics for the past few weeks. The feedback thus far has been positive.

Orders for masks can be placed with the SMA Secretariat at Tel: 6223 1264.

Until the supply of masks is more forthcoming, the SMA Council would like to advise doctors as follows:

- **Masks are in short supply, and should therefore be supplied according to need, i.e. risk of being infected and infecting others.** Logically and statistically, hospital and community healthcare workers are the highest risk group. As such, the masks sold at SMA are **primarily intended for use by medical and clinic staff when they provide healthcare services.**
- Any masks given or sold to persons, other than healthcare workers, should be **based on medical judgement and necessity.**
- If resale of masks is deemed necessary based on reasons above, **the resale price should only cover the cost of sale (cost of mask itself + administrative fee).** In fact, if the patient cannot afford the mask, but needs it for medically valid reasons, then the right thing to do may be to sell the mask below cost price, or even to give the patient the mask.

Disposable surgical gowns are also available for sale over the counter, subject to stock availability and a first-come-first-served basis. ■

“Interim Advisory on Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) for Doctors Practising in Primary Care & Family Practice Settings in Singapore”

*Issued and updated regularly by the
College of Family Physicians Singapore (CFPS)*

Download this advisory from
<http://www.cfps.org.sg/news/sarsupdate.html>
or call the CFPS at **Tel: 6223 0606**