

# Guest of Honour's

## SPEECH

Text by Minister Gan Kim Yong



I am honoured to be conferred the SMA Honorary Membership this evening and I thank the Association for this honour. I would like to think that this is not so much a result of my personal efforts but rather a reflection of the close collaboration and partnership between the Ministry of Health (MOH) and healthcare professionals. I would like to thank my colleagues in MOH for their hard work and all the healthcare professionals both in the public healthcare institutions as well as in private practice for working with us in providing high-quality care for our patients.

### **SMA's contributions in shaping healthcare policies**

With a network of over 8,000 members from the public and private sectors, as well as younger and more experienced practitioners, SMA has been a representative of the medical community in engaging the Ministry in issues of interest to the healthcare practitioners and patients.

For example, SMA made significant contributions as a member of the Health Insurance Task Force (HITF)

in the formation of its recommendations. The HITF was an industry-led initiative which made several recommendations to better manage rising healthcare costs and insurance premiums. A key recommendation is the setting of fee benchmarks to guide doctors and patients. We have since appointed the Fee Benchmarks Advisory Committee, led by Dr Lim Yean Teng. The Committee is expected to release its recommendations by the second half of 2018.

Another example was SMA's role in the Ministry's review of charging practices adopted by some managed care companies and third-party administrators (TPAs). Through consultations with professional bodies such as the SMA, the Academy of Medicine Singapore, and the College of Family Physicians Singapore, and industry associations like the Life Insurance Association, steps were taken to engage the third-party service providers and doctors. The TPAs eventually revised their contracts with doctors and enhanced transparency of fee arrangements.

I am also grateful for the SMA's role in assisting the Ministry in the implementation of important measures on the ground, such as the Public Health Preparedness Clinics (PHPC)



Dr Lee Yik Voon presenting the token of appreciation to our Guest of Honour, Minister Gan Kim Yong

scheme. This scheme was part of MOH's efforts to partner primary care clinics to better care for patients during public health emergencies, such as the haze situation in 2015. With SMA's help to encourage its members to sign up, we were able to mobilise more than 630 participating PHPCs to see around 50,000 haze-related attendances. Their participation ensured that children, the elderly and Singaporeans from lower- and middle-income groups had access to timely and affordable treatment for haze-related conditions.

### SMA as a voice of the medical profession

SMA has also provided valuable feedback to MOH on the views and concerns of medical practitioners on the ground, including those surrounding emerging healthcare challenges. These included postgraduate medical training and residency, the National Electronic Health

Record and telemedicine practices. This two-way communication has enabled a collaborative partnership effort between the Ministry and SMA to better address emerging healthcare challenges.

### Further collaboration between MOH and SMA: Beyond Healthcare 2020

We rolled out the Healthcare 2020 Masterplan in 2012 to add capacity, improve affordability and enhance care quality in Singapore. MOH has been working hard to see this vision into fruition and also to plan beyond 2020.

To ensure that our healthcare system is sustainable beyond 2020, three paradigm shifts need to be made in our delivery of healthcare. These shifts are reflected in the "Three Beyonds" – Beyond Hospital to Community, Beyond Quality to Value, Beyond Healthcare to Health. These will define the direction of

Singapore's efforts to strengthen social and healthcare, manage healthcare costs and encourage healthy living. I believe SMA can contribute positively by sharing with the medical fraternity the need for care transformation and work together with us as we embark on this journey. The challenges ahead will be great but I am confident that through the Ministry's collaboration with our stakeholders like the SMA, we can work together to build a good, affordable and sustainable healthcare system for all Singaporeans.

### Conclusion

On this note, I would like to thank the Association for its contributions thus far, and for the award of Honorary Member. I look forward to the opportunities ahead in working with the SMA. Congratulations to all awardees tonight and I wish you all a wonderful evening.

Thank you. ♦