

BASIC HEALTH LAW COURSE

Text by Jasmine Soo, Executive, Event and Committee Support

The Basic Health Law Course, a collaboration between SMA and Singapore General Hospital Postgraduate Medical Institute, was held at Academia over the span of three Saturdays – 2, 9 and 16 September 2017. The course covered the following topics:

- Introduction to Health Law and Legal Responsibilities of Medical Practitioners
- Understanding the Elements of Medical Negligence
- Professional Accountability and Misconduct

The course saw a turnout of 42 participants on Day 1, 45 participants on Day 2 and 38 participants on Day 3. Those in attendance were healthcare professionals from various specialities, such as general medicine, ENT, neurology and gastroenterology. The course was delivered by SMA Centre for Medical Ethics and Professionalism core faculty, which comprised both doctors and lawyers.

During the first session held on 2 September, Adj A/Prof Lee See Muah, Senior Consultant, Occupational Medicine, Ng Teng Fong General Hospital, presented the attendees with the basics of health law. Ms Kuah Boon Theng, Director, Legal

Clinic LLC, then provided an elaborate “Introduction to Health Law and The Singapore Legal System” and stressed on how the practice of medicine is founded on honour and integrity. Adj A/Prof Seow Wan Tew, Senior Consultant, Neurosurgical Service, KK Women’s and Children’s Hospital, then spoke on “Key Statutes and Laws that Apply to Healthcare Practice” and “Introduction to Health Law and Legal Responsibilities and Discussion”.

The second session held on 9 September started off with Dr T Thirumoorthy, Immediate Past Executive Director, SMA Centre for Medical Ethics and Professionalism, giving the participants an “Introduction on Medical Negligence”, followed by Mr Edmund Kronenburg, Managing Partner, Braddell Brothers LLP, sharing on the topic of “Understanding the Elements of Medical Negligence” with his inputs and experience from a lawyer’s point of view. Prof Kumaralingam Amirthalingam, Professor, Faculty of Law Chair, NUS Teaching Academy, National University of Singapore, then spoke on the “Failure to Inform/Advise – the Law on Informed Consent”. A case discussion followed, which participants complimented as “objective and robust”.

During the third session held on 16 September, Dr Peter Loke, Regional

Medical Advisor, Syngenta Asia Pacific Pte Ltd, spoke on “The Medical Registration Act and Professional Accountability” and elaborated on the “Role and Powers of Singapore Medical Council (SMC) and the Importance of the SMC Ethical Code and Guidelines”. He also talked about the “Difference between Law, Professional Regulation and Ethical Reasoning”. Mr Christopher Chong, Senior Partner, Dentons Rodyk, then concluded the last session of the course with his sharing on “Singapore Medical Council Disciplinary Process and Management of Risk”.

Throughout the course, participants were supplied with useful information from both the medical and legal points of view. The course ended with positive feedback from participants, with the weighted average (out of 5) being 4.31, 4.48 and 4.14 for Days 1, 2 and 3, respectively. Participants provided feedback such as “The talks by the lawyers are good! We doctors want to know the legal aspects from medical lawyers.” and “Summarised notes and relevant cases were provided to us, and there was good discussion with legal input.”

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all speakers and participants for setting aside their time on three Saturdays to attend this course. ♦



Legend

1. Participants being involved in and enjoying Dr Peter Loke’s session

