

EDUCATING, EMPOWERING, ELEVATING ETHICS

SMA CMEP 25 Years

2025 marks the 25th year since the founding of the SMA Centre for Medical Ethics and Professionalism (SMA CMEP). Here, we share a brief recap of SMA CMEP's milestones since its auguration.

Late 1990s

Founding of SMA CMEP

In the late 1990s, a misalignment between public expectations and professional services was identified by SMA. SMA CMEP was thus established to uphold medical professionalism and ethics amid rising costs of healthcare, patient expectations and medico-legal risks.



June 2000

The beginning

On 10 June 2000, SMA co-organised with Inter-Professional Presidents' Group (IPPG) a seminar on professionalism. This was the inaugural education event run by SMA CMEP.

To commemorate this milestone, SMA held a symbolic foundation-laying ceremony for SMA CMEP, featuring a bonsai tree to represent growth, resilience and longevity. The event also saw the soft launch of the SMA CMEP website.



January 2001

The early years

SMA CMEP launched a series of seminars on bioethics and health law held at the Tan Tock Seng Hospital Theatre. The inaugural seminar on 11 January 2001 marked the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between SMA and Tan Tock Seng Hospital. This collaboration aimed to promote continuing education, facilitate research, and support the publication and dissemination of teaching on health law and ethics with the aim of benefitting all healthcare professionals in Singapore.

2006

SMA CMEP was commissioned by the Ministry of Health and Joint Committee on Specialist Training to develop and deliver the Medical Ethics, Professionalism and Health Law Course to specialists and family medicine trainees prior to their exit examinations.

This training was initially delivered to advanced specialty trainees before being extended to the residency programmes. To date, SMA CMEP has organised 83 courses and trained 5,852 doctors.

2012

The Office of the Public Guardian engaged SMA CMEP to develop and administer the online accreditation module for Lasting Power of Attorney (LPA) certificate issuers. As of 31 May 2025, a total of 2,723 doctors have been accredited through the programme.

Following the launch of the LPA accreditation programme, the SMA CMEP board observed ongoing uncertainties among doctors in assessing mental capacity – particularly in cases involving patients with fluctuating or diminished capacity, as well as persons

with intellectual disabilities (PWIDs). In response, a committee was formed to address these challenges. The committee comprises doctors and lawyers who are experienced in LPA matters, deputyship applications and court-related mental capacity assessment reports. It regularly organises seminars focused on mental capacity assessment, covering assessment methodologies, sample medical reports and common ethical issues encountered when working with PWIDs and patients with fluctuating or diminished mental capacity.

October 2013

The first Annual National Medico-Legal Seminar was co-organised by SMA CMEP and the Medico-Legal Society of Singapore (MLSS) on 5 and 6 October 2013. The 1.5-day seminar covers issues at the interface between medical ethics and the law. Luminaries who have delivered plenary lectures include Minister Dr Lam Pin Min, Mr Jeffrey Chan SC, Mr Leslie Chew SC, Judge Marvin Bay, Judge Colin Tan, Justice Judith Prakash, Prof Kumaralingam Amirthalingam, Prof Leonard Lee and Ms Regina Chang (Public Guardian). To date, SMA CMEP and MLSS have organised nine seminars with a total of 1,580 participants.

The next seminar will be held on 13 to 14 September 2025, titled “Medical Record Keeping in an Evolving Technological and Regulatory Landscape”. The seminar will include speakers such as Prof Joseph Sung (Dean, Lee Kong Chian Medical School), Prof Ngiam Kee Yuen (NUS Medicine) and A/Prof Liu Nan (Duke-NUS Medical School).



Scan QR code to find out more.

November 2012

On 23 to 24 November 2012, SMA CMEP held its first Regional Conference on Professional Accountability and Professional Misconduct. The event brought together healthcare professionals (including doctors, nurses, dentists and traditional Chinese medicine physicians) from Singapore, international colleagues from Malaysia, Hong Kong and Australia, and legal and indemnity experts to examine key issues and challenges.

July 2014

SMA CMEP collaborated with the Academy of Medicine, Singapore, Law Society of Singapore and the State Courts of Singapore to organise the inaugural Medical Expert Witness Training. The two-day seminar's objective is to equip medical practitioners with the legal knowledge and skills needed to prepare medical expert reports and deliver oral evidence. To date, SMA CMEP has organised seven courses and trained 209 experts. The next run is scheduled for 2026.

September 2020

A new educational series (Medicine, Doctors and the Law) comprising six seminars was launched to support the professional development and legal knowledge of medical doctors. Specially designed for doctors at associate consultant level and above who hold leadership roles, the series also serves

as a foundational course to prepare doctors who may be called upon to sit in judgement during inquiries or handle complaints involving colleagues. To date, SMA CMEP has conducted 42 sessions with a total of 1,529 participants.

January 2024

In 2024, with the introduction of mandatory medical ethics (MME) continuing medical education requirements, SMA CMEP organised 18 MME programmes, awarding a total of 15,616 MME points to participants. These MME programmes were delivered free of charge for SMA Members via webinars, in-person seminars and distance-learning through the SMA learning management portal. In 2025, SMA collaborated with Singapore Health Services (SingHealth) to deliver 12,566 MME points to SingHealth doctors via webinars. SMA has also produced publications in the *Singapore Medical Journal* to cater for MME requirements. SMA CMEP has published more than 62 articles on ethics, law and professionalism since its founding in 2000.



SMA Annual Dinner 2025 | 17 May

May 2025

On 17 May 2025, SMA CMEP celebrated its 25th anniversary at the SMA Annual Dinner. SMA President Dr Ng Chee Kwan extended gratitude on behalf of SMA to all faculty members without whom none of the many achievements of SMA

CMEP would have been possible. The faculty with their tireless dedication and professionalism continue to serve as exemplars for the entire profession to emulate. They remind us of the truth of Prof Thirumoorthy's wisdom:

“Becoming an ethical clinician is more than simply following a set of rules.”

Appreciation

Guided by an independent Board of Advisors, SMA CMEP has garnered strong support from leading experts in the field. Its board and faculty comprise senior doctors and lawyers with deep expertise in medical ethics, professionalism and health law.

The growth and success of SMA CMEP over the past 25 years would not have been possible without the visionary leadership and dedication of its executive directors:

- **Prof T Thirumoorthy** (Founding Director, 2000 to 2003; Executive Director, 2011 to 2016)
- **Prof Chin Jing Jih** (Executive Director, 2004 to 2010)
- **A/Prof Gerald Chua** (Executive Director, 2016 to 2019)
- **Dr Lee Pheng Soon** (Executive Director, 2019 to 2022)
- **A/Prof Anantham Devanand** (Executive Director, 2022 to present)

Special recognition also goes to the Centre's past and present managers: **Ms Ng Wee Fong**, **Ms Caroline Tan**, **Ms Loy Mongshi** and **Ms Denise Tan**, as well as SMA's chief administrator **Ms Krysanja Tan** and the broader SMA Secretariat, whose steadfast contributions have been the metaphorical engine driving SMA CMEP forward. ♦

Legend

1. SMA CMEP foundation laying ceremony with a bonsai tree
2. SMA-TTSH MOU signing ceremony
3. SMA CMEP faculty at SMA Annual Dinner 2025
4. SMA President with SMA CMEP's past and present executive directors (missing A/Prof Gerald Chua)

