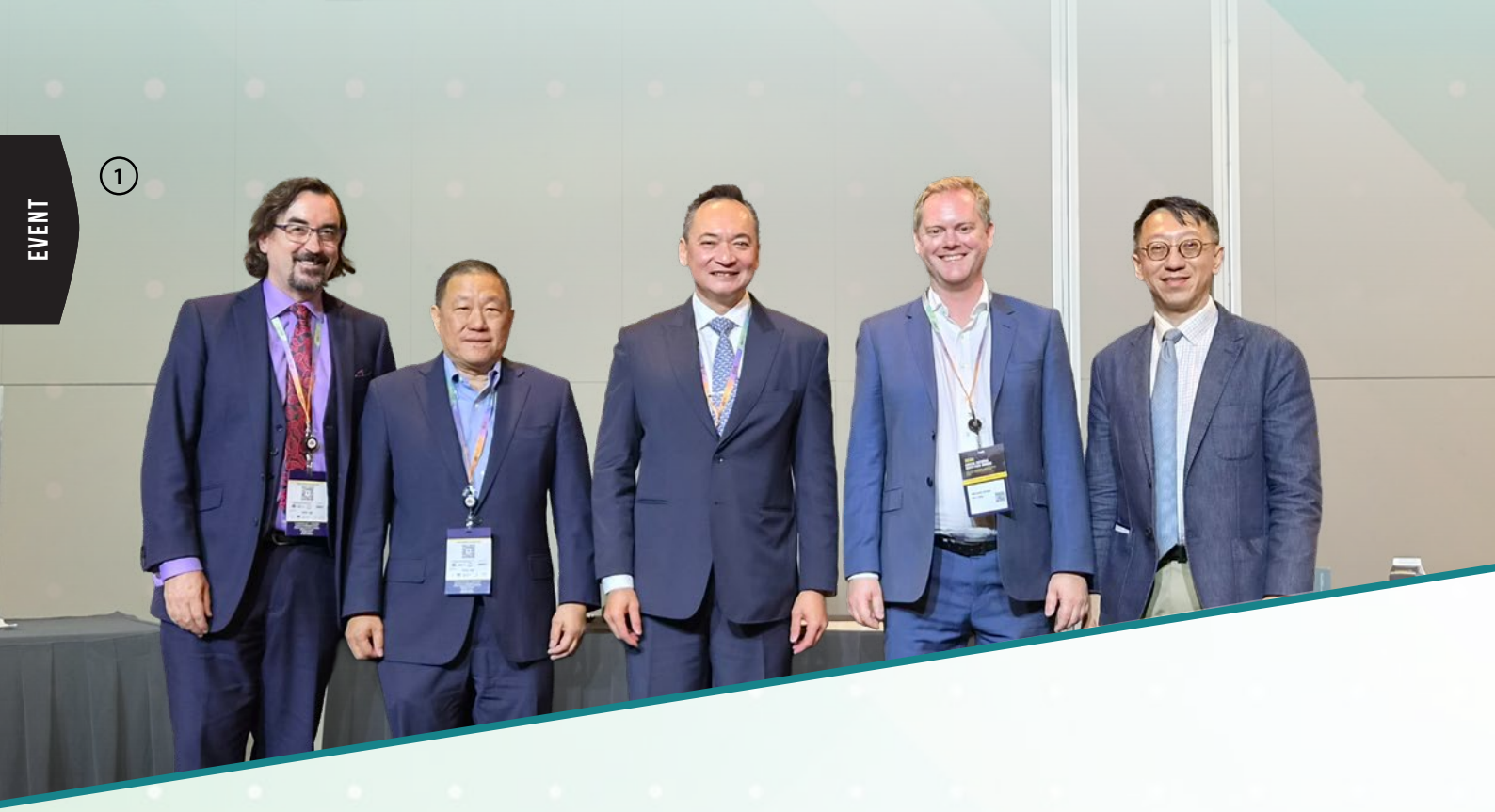

THE LAST DECISIONS – Annual National Medico-Legal Seminar 2026

Text by Benjamin Ong, Editorial Executive



Over the weekend of 17 and 18 October 2026, more than 200 doctors and lawyers gathered at One Farrer Hotel to share and discuss the complex and challenging matters surrounding end-of-life care at the Annual National Medico-Legal Seminar (ANMLS) 2026, jointly organised by the SMA Centre for Medical Ethics and Professionalism (SMA CMEP) and the Medico-Legal Society of Singapore (MLSS). This year's focus was on "The Last Decisions: Medico-Legal Perspectives on End-of-Life Care", and speakers covered a wide variety of topics including conflict and cultural management, doctrines surrounding end-of-life care and the ethics of life-sustaining treatment.

Adj A/Prof Vishal G Shelat, Organising Chairperson of ANMLS 2026 and SMA CMEP Associate Director, opened the seminar with a brief address, and

Prof Richard Huxtable began the day with a broad exploration on "dying matters", covering the four topics of advance decision-making, withdrawing treatment, relief of symptoms and assisted dying. Other speakers for the day presented on topics such as artificial nutrition and hydration, what can be learnt from palliative cases across the globe, and communication surrounding end-of-life matters. Prof Lalit Kumar's sharing on six personal palliative cases he encountered across his career was especially poignant and drove home the point that palliative sedation is fundamentally about the patient's dignity, not about shortening their lives.

Panel discussions invited plenty of audience engagement, with audience members posing many interesting questions drawn from their own experiences. However, the highlight of the first day was a structured debate on medical futility surrounding the motion: "Doctors should be allowed to provide life-sustaining treatment even where it does not improve the patient's condition." Arguing the proposition were Prof Chin Jing Jih and Prof Richard Huxtable, while A/Prof Michael Dunn and Mr Melvin See argued the opposition. The lively debate was adjudicated by Mr Edmund Kronenberg, MLSS President, who also crafted the debate motion. After the debaters concluded their impassioned speeches, Mr Kronenberg shared that he intentionally included a great deal of ambiguity within the motion to facilitate a deeper discussion for all.

The second day of ANMLS was furthered by sharing of end-of-life cases in Hong Kong, discussion surrounding documentation of advance care planning, the role of nurses in end-of-life care, and the use of artificial intelligence technology in prognostic tools for end-of-life decision-making. In his closing address, Dr Aung Myint Oo @ Ye Jian Guo, Vice President (Medical) of MLSS and SMA CMEP teaching faculty, thanked participants for their attendance and enthusiastic contribution to the seminar.

We would also like to express our thanks to all speakers and participants, our main sponsor, Medical Protection Society, as well as our other sponsors for the success of the Annual National Medico-Legal Seminar 2026. ◆

Legend

1. MLSS President Edmund Kronenberg (centre) with the Day 1 debators

2. Perspectives from allied health professionals and lawyers help to build a holistic understanding of end-of-life care

3. Panel discussions elicited insightful and incisive dialogue with audience members



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