The Singapore Medical Association (SMA) was formed in 1959, and is the national medical organisation representing the majority of medical practitioners and medical students in Singapore.

SMA’s slogan, ‘For Doctors, For Patients’, reflects its recognition that the doctor-patient relationship lies at the heart of any scientific revelation, technological innovation, policy decision and business practice that affects healthcare, as well as its commitment to protect this relationship.

Our Motto
Jasa Utama, ‘Service before Self’

Our Objectives
- To promote the medical and allied sciences in Singapore
- To maintain the honour and interests of the medical profession
- To foster and preserve the unity and aim of purpose of the medical profession as a whole
- To voice its opinion, and to acquaint the Government and other relevant bodies with the policies and attitudes of the profession
- To support a higher standard of medical ethics and conduct
- To enlighten and direct public opinion on the problems of health in Singapore
- To publish papers, journals and other materials in furtherance of these objectives
A UNITED PROFESSION

In the past year, we have seen many challenges to the healthcare profession, such as changes to healthcare policy, advances in technology and communication, and innovative business practices, which all affect the way doctors interact with their patients. These changes cannot be at the expense of the values and ethics that we hold as important in the practice of good medicine. SMA continues to be actively engaged in advocating for the best healthcare system for Singapore, for the benefit of both doctors and patients.

One of our efforts involved working with the other Professional Bodies (PBs) – the Academy of Medicine Singapore (AMS) and the College of Family Physicians Singapore (CFPS). The entire medical profession has shown great unity amid the challenges of the past year, particularly the three PBs, which displayed remarkable solidarity and collegiality. On different occasions, we came together to discuss issues at hand, for instance business practices involving third-party administrators (TPAs), then returned to our respective councils to seek consensus and membership support.

In January 2017, the 2016 Singapore Medical Council (SMC) Ethical Code and Ethical Guidelines (ECEG) came into force, except for one clause. In a separate letter, SMC gave practitioners until 1 July 2017 to comply with the ECEG, which prohibits doctors from paying TPAs “fees that are based primarily on the services the doctors provide”. This clause was to address the problem of fee splitting in the market, which was tarnishing the professional image of doctors. The date extension allowed doctors time to look into their terms of contract and modify or exit existing arrangements with TPAs so as not to breach this clause.

SMA, together with CFPS and AMS, held several rounds of meetings with the Ministry of Health (MOH) and SMC. After receiving feedback from members, we met with insurance companies and TPAs on 16 March 2017 in a joint session. The three PBs recommended that in order to comply with the ECEG, TPA contracts should adopt a fixed administrative fee that can be tiered (based on the complexity of the administrative process and for cost recovery for running the scheme) and that the previous percentage calculation should be dropped. We followed up with a joint advisory on 11 April 2017, stating that doctors should not commit to contracts with percentage fees.

The three PBs worked hard over the following months to answer a flood of inquiries from practitioners and TPAs, and to help them comply with the new requirements. We are pleased to note that industry players took active steps to review and change their terms of contracts and financial arrangements, so that medical fees are now more transparent to patients.

OUR FUTURE DOCTORS

SMA continues to support the future of our profession. In 2017, we met with student leaders and the wider student bodies on numerous occasions, organised the first SMA National Medical Students’ Convention with students of the three medical schools, and supported some of their community projects and medical students in financial difficulty. This allows our journey in medicine to be guided by the generations of doctors before them, so that values can be passed on to the future generation of doctors.

Singapore has more than 13,000 registered doctors as of 31 December 2016. This number has grown from ten years ago, when there were a total of 7,400 doctors registered to practise in Singapore and only one medical school.

The medical profession continues to be highly regarded, with some of our brightest talents choosing to study medicine either locally or in overseas universities recognised by the SMC. Students being admitted to the medical profession are also increasingly diverse, coming from different backgrounds. The Straits Times has reported that more polytechnic students are securing places in medical schools at National University of Singapore and Nanyang Technological University.

At the same time, tuition fees for a medical degree have been rising. For Singapore citizens, they are up to four times more than for a non-medical degree, ranging from $127,000 to $172,200 over five years. The SMA Charity Fund (SMACF) continues to ensure that medical students from low-income families are given some relief from the financial burden of medical education. Last year, we awarded bursaries and financial assistance to needy medical students from all three medical schools. SMACF has disbursed more than $1 million in financial bursaries to medical students from needy families since 2013, some of whom have a per capita income of less than $1,000 per month.

OLD GUIDELINE, NEW BENCHMARKS

Rising healthcare costs in Singapore is a concern for SMA, and we continue to work with different stakeholders to conceptualise solutions that could keep healthcare costs affordable for those who need them.

SMA has always maintained that a guideline for doctors’ charges is in the best interests of society because of information asymmetry and to protect patients, who are more vulnerable when ill. Patients need them. A fee guideline is a way to keep prices transparent and fair. SMA’s Guideline on Fees was withdrawn in April 2007 on the advice of our lawyers that it might be deemed anti-competitive by the Competition Commission of Singapore, shortly after the Competition Act came into effect in 2006.

In October 2016, the Health Insurance Task Force published recommendations on the management of health insurance costs in Singapore. These included the need for medical fee benchmarks or guidelines, “to address the issue of information asymmetry by providing stakeholders access to information on appropriate charges” and “to mitigate cases of overcharging”.

SMA continued to engage stakeholders and met separately with the Life Insurance Association Singapore as well as the MOH Finance Division, supporting the reintroduction of a fee guideline in some form. In November 2017, the Health Minister announced that the MOH intended to introduce professional fee benchmarks in 2018. With a benchmark in place, doctors will once again have a guide for their fees, and this will provide more transparency for patients and the public.

SMA will provide representation in the fee benchmark committee, which will be one main focus of our work in the coming years.

Once again, it was my privilege to serve the profession and this Association as your President. The work of the Association is important and its influence on society is not insignificant. We seek your strong, continued mandate and membership as we help our doctors to provide the best for their patients in 2018 and beyond.

The SMA slogan, “For Doctors, For Patients” recognises that the doctor-patient relationship is the fundamental unit of interaction between doctors and patients, and lies at the heart of what we do. This unique relationship has stood the test of time and should be protected for its inherent value.

In particular, I wish to highlight three key points of our work over the past year. We will continue our efforts in these matters to better serve doctors and patients.
HONORARY SECRETARY’S REPORT

2017 has been a fruitful year for SMA as we sought to better serve our members and support our patients with the help of our secretariat.

SECRETARY

Dr Anantham Devanand
Assistant Honorary Secretary
Dr Lim Kheng Choon
Honorary Secretary

FOR DOCTORS

Recognising the rapidity of new advances, SMA devoted resources and publicity in 2017 to educating our membership about the influx of technology and its impact. We held a Singapore Medical Week and FutureMed 2017 Conference and Expo, where we were privileged to hear from many distinguished speakers on topics ranging from the state of medical education, to the future of healthcare delivery, to the changing practice environment. We will continue to seek out new sources of revenue and to add value to our membership.

FOR PATIENTS

As a profession, it is important to speak up on behalf of our patients to protect their autonomy. MOH recently announced its intention to replace the current Private Hospitals and Medical Clinics Act with the new Healthcare Services Bill (HCS Bill), targeted for enactment in 2019. The HCS Bill will regulate not only mainstream healthcare services providers, but also non-premises-based providers such as telemedicine service providers. We encourage our members to be familiar with the changes and to provide feedback via MOH channels. SMA has communicated our concern that the proposed format of implementation would result in loss of patient privacy and thus patient autonomy, as it does not allow the patient to choose to exclude details of visits to healthcare institutions from the National Electronic Health Record database. We are happy to know that MOH has changed its position concerning this matter.

TO SUPPORT VULNERABLE PATIENTS

The SMA Centre for Medical Ethics and Professionalism (CMEP), together with the Office of the Public Guardian, developed an online learning programme to help our doctors assess the mental capacity of persons with intellectual disabilities (PwIDs). We hope to develop a comprehensive report that will assist in the future care of PwIDs by the court-appointed deputy and caregivers.

OUR SECRETARIAT

Many of SMA’s achievements would not be possible without the leadership of Dr Lee Yik Voon (Executive Director) and Mr Martin Ho (Chief Administrator) and our tireless secretariat. It gives me great pleasure to introduce four of them in this annual report (see page 24).

For the start of the financial year, we have projected a reduced service fee income due to a change in indemnity provider for public sector doctors.

At the start of the financial year, we have projected a reduced service fee income due to a change in indemnity provider for public sector doctors. To counter this income reduction, we proactively took steps to seek out new sources of revenue and to add value to our membership.

We wish to thank Dr Tammy Chan and her Future Finance Workgroup for actively exploring various possibilities to ensure financial sustainability for the long term. The Workgroup’s recommendations resulted in robust discussions during the Council Retreat in April 2017.

Since then, we have launched the SMA eMarket and implemented complimentary access to SMU’s continuing medical education (CME) quizzes for members, and reviewed the course fees of SMA CMEP courses, among other initiatives.

We will continue to seek out new projects that are within our areas of expertise as we work toward transforming the Association and improving its financial management.

As alluded to in the 2016 annual report, we aimed to break even in 2017, since the various new initiatives will take time to produce positive returns. However, we are pleased to announce that the SMA Group was able to close the year with a surplus of $314,594 with an accumulated fund of $7,790,480.

The better-than-expected surplus is mainly due to the astute decisions made by our investment committee, headed by Chairman, Adj Prof Tan Sze Wee, who is also the Executive Director of Singapore Medical Association Pte Ltd. Since the inception of our investments with UBS AG in July 2008, we have achieved an annualised return of investment of 3.78%, in line with our longer-term goal of providing a reasonable return on investment in a low-risk portfolio.

We are grateful to the investment committee, under the able leadership of Adj Prof Tan, for their hard work and well-timed decisions.

In terms of expenses, we continued to find ways to manage our costs and increase our productivity. For instance, we upgraded our online systems to move traditionally manual processes to the online space. Members can now retrieve their invoices and receipts and make payment online with their credit cards. This has enhanced our efficiency, reduced costs and enabled us to focus on augmenting our services to members. In 2018, we foresee a possible change in our rental expenses, as our lease at 2 College Road, Alumni Medical Centre will expire in August 2018.

We will continue to seek out new projects that are within our areas of expertise as we work toward transforming the Association and improving its financial management.

Honorary Treasurer

Dr Benny Loo Kai Guo
Honorary Treasurer

From left to right:
Dr Ng Choo Kwan
Assistant Honorary Treasurer
Dr Benny Loo Kai Guo
Honorary Treasurer
**KEY STATISTICS IN 2017**

- **SMA Members**
  - General Practitioner/Family Physician: 28%
  - Specialist: 30%
  - Medical Student: 31%
  - House Officer/Medical Officer: 11%

- **5 out of 10 SMA Members are from the public sector**

- **16 Sensory Interest Groups**

- **22 Membership events**

- **1,903 Participants**

- **58th ANNUAL REPORT 2017/2018**
  - Stronger Together

- **210 Bursaries awarded by SMA Charity Fund since 2013**
  - > $1 million Disbursed to needy medical students since 2013

- **76 Courses**
  - 5,733 Participants
  - $90,946 Course subsidies for SMA members

- **39 CME events**
  - Up to 98 CME points per year

- **Key government meetings**
  - 20

- **Sensory Interest Groups**
  - 16

- **Media statements**
  - 8

- **Policy submissions**
  - 25

- **Advisories issued**
  - 3

- **Courses**
  - 76

- **Participants**
  - 5,733

- **Event subsidies**
  - $90,946

- **International meetings**
  - 6

- **Participants**
  - 5,733

- **CME events**
  - 39

- **CME points per year**
  - Up to 98
Whether it’s drafting a letter to the Ministry or stating our position in a press release, meeting with student leaders to address their concerns, mediating between a doctor and an irate patient, or organising a seminar, lecture or soccer tournament – our members are at the heart of what we do. Since 1959, the aim of SMA has remained unwavering – to maintain the honour of the medical profession and represent its interests, as well as advocate the overall well-being of patients in Singapore.

SMA’s 8,474-strong membership comprises medical students, residents, practising doctors and retired doctors. From the moment a cohort of aspiring doctors steps into medical school, through the different stages of their medical training and progression from junior to senior doctors till retirement, SMA has been there, steadfastly supporting our members. We engage government agencies and professional bodies to advocate doctors’ rights and that of their patients, provide thought leadership through involvement in committees that effect policy changes, aid our members in continuing medical education and professional development, as well as provide avenues for members to network and tools to enhance their medical practice.

In the following pages, we outline the impact of our work across the membership, as well as among doctors in training and physicians practising in both the public and private sectors.
LEADERSHIP & ADVOCACY

In 2017, we played an active role in advancing our positions on issues that affect our members and Singapore healthcare. Our advocacy work aims to provide a voice for the profession, effect change for doctors and patients, as well as shape a more inclusive and collaborative healthcare environment. We do this by speaking out on issues that matter to doctors and patients – in our publications, in the media and government meetings, and through formal channels such as workgroups, advisory committees and task forces.

ADVOCACY SNAPSHOTT

COMPLAINTS AND DISCIPLINARY PROCESS

- We conveyed members’ feedback and concerns to the MOH and SMC regarding High Court and SMC disciplinary tribunal cases, specifically one involving a senior paediatrician who failed to diagnose a child with Kawasaki disease.

CLARIFICATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

- In the September issue President’s Forum in SMA News, Dr Wong Tien Hua raised members’ concerns, provided a flow-chart showing the SMC complaints process and suggested recommendations to improve the disciplinary process.

NEGOTIATIONS WITH INDEMNITY PROVIDERS

- We successfully negotiated with the Medical Protection Society (MPS) for concessions to reduce the impact of classification changes, which resulted in fewer doctors having to pay a higher subscription rate.

MANAGED CARE

- On 11 April 2017, SMA, Academy of Medicine Singapore and College of Family Physicians Singapore issued a joint advisory, to provide guidance on compliance with SMC’s Guideline H3(7) of the 2016 Ethical Code and Ethical Guidelines.

- On 23 June 2017, the three professional bodies issued a further joint advisory to guide members on compliance with SMC’s Guideline H3(7) of the 2016 Ethical Code and Ethical Guidelines.

- We also proposed ways to ensure that public sector doctors have a smooth transition of indemnity providers from MPS to Jardine Lloyd Thompson.

- We conveyed members’ feedback and concerns to the MOH and SMC regarding High Court and SMC disciplinary tribunal cases, specifically one involving a senior paediatrician who failed to diagnose a child with Kawasaki disease.

- We maintain ongoing communications with TPA companies to work toward more ethical arrangements.

HEALTH TECHNOLOGY ASSESSMENTS (HTAs)

- We met with the Agency for Care Effectiveness to highlight potential challenges faced by doctors and provided feedback relating to HTAs, so that such assessments will be cost-effective and feasible for doctors on the ground.

FEEDBACK ON FEASIBILITY

- We wrote to the General Insurance Association of Singapore and Life Insurance Association Singapore, copied to the Monetary Authority of Singapore, highlighting feedback from members that some patients were informed by their financial advisors/insurance agents that the completion of insurance forms and drafting of medical reports were not chargeable. We reiterated that these professional services involve time and professional input from doctors, and are therefore chargeable.

- SMA wrote to the General Insurance Association of Singapore and Life Insurance Association Singapore, copied to the Monetary Authority of Singapore, highlighting feedback from members that some patients were informed by their financial advisors/insurance agents that the completion of insurance forms and drafting of medical reports were not chargeable. We reiterated that these professional services involve time and professional input from doctors, and are therefore chargeable.

PROFESSIONAL FEES

- We also proposed ways to ensure that public sector doctors have a smooth transition of indemnity providers from MPS to Jardine Lloyd Thompson.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE SURVEYS

- We conveyed members’ feedback and concerns to the MOH and SMC regarding High Court and SMC disciplinary tribunal cases, specifically one involving a senior paediatrician who failed to diagnose a child with Kawasaki disease.

- We maintain ongoing communications with TPA companies to work toward more ethical arrangements.

CLARIFICATION ON SHORTAGE OF TETANUS TOXOID (TT) VACCINE

- On behalf of members who were unable to acquire the TT vaccine, SMA sought clarifications from MOH regarding the situation.

- Subsequently, MOH confirmed the presence of a global shortage and provided alternative solutions to the problem.

DOCTORS IN TRAINING (DITs)

- Based on information and feedback from the ground about the evolving training landscape, the SMA DIT Committee sought clarifications from MOH on potential changes to the current residency programme to train more generalist doctors and on the number of available specialist positions. We await MOH’s reply on this.

SUBMISSIONS & ENGAGEMENT

- We actively engage with policymakers, government bodies, other professional bodies and the media, to help ensure that the views of our profession are well represented. In 2017, we made 8 submissions to government bodies across a range of healthcare-related topics; participated in 20 key government meetings; issued 3 advisories; and responded to 8 media enquiries.

I’ve been serving as SMA’s representative to the Ministry of Manpower (MOM) Workplace Safety and Health (WSH) (Healthcare) Committee since April 2014. Volunteering in the committee allows me to provide both SMA’s and a private practice perspective to the WSH Council. SMA’s involvement also allows us to gain valuable insights into workplace safety trends and survey results, enabling us to implement educational activities to inform and update our members. We all have busy jobs, families and numerous obligations – saying ‘no’ to volunteerism 80% of the time is probably understandable; for the other 20%, I urge my fellow colleagues to consider saying ‘yes’ to SMA and other professional medical bodies!

DR WONG SIN YEW
MOM WSH (Healthcare) Committee

PROFIT GUARANTEES

- CAUTIONARY ADVICE ON ETHICAL ISSUES RELATING TO PROFIT GUARANTEES
  - In a Business Times article on 25 April 2017, SMA warned that the financial imperative imposed by profit guarantees is incompatible with the SMC Physician’s Pledge and other ethical principles.

  - Subsequently, we noted that some companies have removed the term from their proposed mergers and acquisitions documentation.

MOH PRIMARY CARE SURVEY

- At a meeting with MOH representatives on 10 October 2017, SMA recommended that more financial data be presented in future editions of the MOH Primary Care Survey. This was in response to concerns of financial sustainability faced by members running their own practices.

DRUG SHORTAGE

- The Ministry of Manpower subsequently responded in media reports that it would take the appropriate action.

FEEDBACK ON DELAYS

- On 11 April 2017, SMA, Academy of Medicine Singapore and College of Family Physicians Singapore issued a joint advisory, to provide guidance on compliance with SMC’s Guideline H3(7) of the 2016 Ethical Code and Ethical Guidelines.

- On 23 June 2017, the three professional bodies issued a further joint advisory to guide members on compliance with SMC’s Guideline H3(7) of the 2016 Ethical Code and Ethical Guidelines.

- We also proposed ways to ensure that public sector doctors have a smooth transition of indemnity providers from MPS to Jardine Lloyd Thompson.
As the representative national medical association of Singapore, SMA has membership in the World Medical Association, Confederation of Medical Associations in Asia and Oceania, and Medical Association of South East Asian Nations. Through the annual meetings, as well as formal and informal forums, SMA keeps itself updated on the latest medical issues and trends, including medical ethics, human rights, and public health; this information exchange helps SMA to adopt a more well-rounded outlook, and to anticipate possible future developments in our local medical landscape.

SMA: PROFIT GUARANTEES PROHIBITED UNDER MEDICAL ETHICS GUIDELINES

The Business Times, 25 April 2017

SMA president Wong Tien Hua said the Association hopes all medical professionals involved in buying and selling of medical practices will adhere strictly to the handbook of medical ethics currently in force.

MOH TO INTRODUCE BENCHMARKS FOR FEES CHARGED BY DOCTORS FROM 2018 – A DECADE AFTER THEY WERE WITHDRAWN

The Straits Times, 30 November 2017

Dr Wong Tien Hua, President of the SMA, said: “Our position has always been that a fee guideline is useful for both doctors and the public… They (the benchmarks) must be robust… Other equally important initiatives would include reviewing hospital charges, educating the public and insurance product redesign.”

INTERNSHIP RELATIONS

We recognise that lifelong learning is an integral part of our members’ professional development. In 2017, we continued to expand our educational offering to include a broad range of medical-, ethics- and practice-related content, as well as continuing medical education (CME) programmes, to help you stay ahead of developments in medicine. For members who are clinician-scientists, we have waived the processing fee for your article submission to the Singapore Medical Journal (SMJ), providing an avenue for your research to be published expediently.

SMA CENTRE FOR MEDICAL ETHICS AND PROFESSIONALISM (CMEP)

SMA CMEP was founded in June 2000 to develop and promote the art and science of medical ethics and medical care for the betterment of patient care and public health, in supporting a strong doctor-patient relationship. It aims to provide a platform for lifelong learning in the areas of Medical Ethics, Professionalism, Health Law and Medical Practice; and leadership in areas of academic training, discussion and research. The SMA CMEP teaching faculty consists of not only doctors, but also lawyers who are experienced in Singapore’s health law.

MENTAL CAPACITY ASSESSMENTS FOR PWIDs

SMA CMEP in collaboration with Academy of Medicine Singapore, Law Society of Singapore, Singapore Academy of Law and the State Courts held its third run of the Medical Expert Witness Training. The objective of the course was to equip medical practitioners with the legal knowledge and skills required to prepare medical expert reports and gain confidence in giving oral expert evidence in court proceedings. The course not only provided training for doctors, but also allowed lawyers in training to participate in cross-examinations in court. We hope this course will create greater understanding of the mental capacity of persons with intellectual disabilities (PWIDs), and assess the impact of the mental capacity of PWIDs on medical practice. SMA CMEP has stepped in to fill a much-needed gap, in hopes that more doctors will be equipped to help this group of vulnerable patients in the long run.

MEDICAL EXPERT WITNESS TRAINING

In 2017, SMA CMEP in collaboration with Academy of Medicine Singapore, Law Society of Singapore, Singapore Academy of Law and the State Courts held its third run of the Medical Expert Witness Training. The objective of the course was to equip medical practitioners with the legal knowledge and skills required to prepare medical expert reports and gain confidence in giving oral expert evidence in court proceedings. The course not only provided training for doctors, but also allowed lawyers in training to participate in cross-examinations in court. We hope this course will create greater understanding of court proceedings, as well as increase the pool of medical expert witnesses.

SMA CMEP Teaching Faculty

Prof Kumaralingam Amirthalingam
Ms Rebecca Chew
Mr Christopher Chong
Mr Edmund Kronenburg
Ms Kuah Boon Theng
Dr Daniel Kwok
Clinical Prof Gilbert Lau
Adj Prof Sue Sue Muah
Mr Lok Siang Pheng
Dr Peter Loke
Ms Mak Wei Munn
Dr Albert Myint Soe
Dr Habeebul Rahman
Dr Harial Rizal Abdullah
Dr Seow Wan Tew
Dr Leslie Tay
A/Prof Cuthbert Teo
Mr Tham Hsu Hsien
Mr Eric Tin
Dr Luke Toh
Dr Edwin Tong
Adj Asst Prof Vishal Kumar G Sheth
A/Prof Jason Yap

Volunteering as an SMA CMEP faculty member has been an invaluable opportunity for me to pursue my interest in the field of medical ethics and professionalism under the tutelage of Dr T Thirumoorthy, who has mentored me through the years. It has deepened my understanding through interaction with other learned faculty members and participants who raised questions during the teaching sessions, and enabled me to align my clinical practice with best practices. Teachers learn most from teaching, as they have to continually be clear in their understanding and current in their knowledge. It has been a most enriching journey.

DR LUKE TOH
SMA CMEP
Faculty Member
SMA PUBLICATIONS

A commitment to continual learning is part of the professionalism that comes with being a medical doctor. SMA Publications—comprising our two monthly flagship publications, SMA News and SMA News—serve to provide members with access to both current scientific contents and a broad range of topics that matter to doctors.

SMA NEWS

In the words of novelist and playwright Edward Bulwer-Lytton, “The pen is mightier than the sword” – SMA News is a newsletter written by doctors, for doctors, and is an important platform for SMA to provide thought leadership and speak on key issues that affect both doctors and patients. In 2017, we published numerous pieces that addressed current and pertinent issues affecting Singapore’s healthcare industry, including discussion on our electronic medical records and its impact on patient privacy and confidentiality; the legal and ethical implications of treating and issuing medical certificates to migrant workers; the new modified Montgomery test for medical advice; and SMC disciplinary processes, as well as joint advisories on fees paid to managed care and third-party administrator companies, to name a few.

We encourage a spirit of free discussion and exchange of ideas, in the hope that this will spark a movement for change in the medical profession practice to keep up with the demands of medicine and the medical profession. We highly encourage our members to be part of this notable annual event. In 2017, Dr Loo Choon Yong, Executive Chairman and Co-founder of Raffles Medical Group, delivered the SMA Lecture titled ‘Internationalising Singapore Healthcare’ in which he posited that sustainable, synergistic collaborations among the Government and Singapore healthcare players are necessary to avert the threat to Singapore’s status as a regional healthcare hub.

PRIVATE PRACTICE SEMINARS

Knowing the many challenges that our members in private practice face to run a thriving and sustainable business, we have created a suite of seminars tailored to equip private practitioners with important professional skills to manage their practice. Over the years, we have responded swiftly to changes in current events and industry requirements by updating our course materials to increase their relevance to members. For instance, in 2017 we included a CorpPass segment in our Tax Seminar and a media management segment in our Risk Management Seminar, in response to changes in government regulations and increasing media exposure among the profession.

SINGAPORE MEDICAL WEEK 2017

Singapore Medical Week 2017, which took place from 24 to 26 August 2017 at the Sands Expo and Convention Centre, is SMA’s first ever all-in-one event comprising FutureMed 2017, an international medical and technology conference and expo; the 47th SMA National Medical Convention; and the 1st SMA National Medical Students’ Convention. The three-day event, attracting more than 1,800 visitors, aimed to be the focal point for stakeholders in Singapore’s healthcare industry, to facilitate critical discussions on vital topics of current importance and to forecast future health trends, unique ideas and new innovations.

SMA LECTURE

The SMA Lecture was instituted in 1963 to establish an annual lecture on medical ethics and related topics. SMA Lecturers are appointed on invitation of the SMA Council and the Lectureship is awarded to eminent and distinguished persons who have made significant contributions to medicine and the community. Through the years, the scope of the Lecture has broadened to include current issues that have significant impact on the practice of medicine and the medical profession. We highly encourage our members to be part of this notable annual event. In 2017, Dr Loo Choon Yong, Executive Chairman and Co-founder of Raffles Medical Group, delivered the SMA Lecture titled ‘Internationalising Singapore Healthcare’ in which he posited that sustainable, synergistic collaborations among the Government and Singapore healthcare players are necessary to avert the threat to Singapore’s status as a regional healthcare hub.

Over the years, I have attended many professional development courses organised by SMA, and I have thoroughly enjoyed them, as they are well organised, informative and practical. The recent seminar on mental capacity assessment for PWIDs was very useful, as we now see more patients requiring such assessments. The basic health law and medicolegal seminars were an eye opener for me, and I have learnt a lot from the legal experts. The MPS talks have taught me to practise good medical documentation, and the practical advice dished out by the experts and the case studies have added much to my understanding. Plus, the CME points are definitely a bonus!

DR PUSHPARANEE

SMA Member

SMA SEMINARS

SMA seminars equip doctors with a range of professional skills and knowledge.

CONTINUING MEDICAL EDUCATION

In 2017, we organised 39 CME activities that provided up to 98 CME points for our members. These CME activities consisted of not only on-site courses with multiple runs annually, but also online distance-learning programmes to enable clinicians to continue learning amid their busy schedules.

SMA CME Activities in 2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of events</th>
<th>CME points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SMA CMEP Courses</td>
<td>11 38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical Practice Management Workshops</td>
<td>3 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical Infection Control Workshops</td>
<td>7 14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cardiac Life Support Training – BCLS and CPR + AED</td>
<td>2 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FutureMed &amp; SMA National Medical Convention</td>
<td>3 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMA Lecture</td>
<td>1 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMA Category 3B distance-learning programme</td>
<td>12 24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>39 98*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The total number of CME points a member could receive if he/she had participated in all the CME events in 2017.
In 2017, we continued to develop and refine initiatives and resources to improve the practice environment for all doctors, from medical students to senior doctors. We aimed to support your professional and personal interests, keeping in mind that collegiality among members of the profession is crucial for the future of Singapore healthcare.

NURTURING THE NEXT GENERATION

We see the importance of nurturing the next generation of doctors who are undergoing training. A deeper understanding of the healthcare landscape can strengthen one’s future practice and our future healthcare system. That is why SMA’s membership subscription fees for medical students are complimentary, while doctors in training (DITs) get a discount based on their year of graduation.

One of our efforts in 2017 was organising numerous talks and networking sessions for local and overseas medical students. These became platforms for students to share their perspectives and learn from challenges their seniors faced, which is key to the continual growth of the profession. The inaugural SMA National Medical Students’ Convention – held in conjunction with Singapore Medical Week 2017 – was the product of months of planning, both among Singapore’s three medical schools and across generations of medical student leaders. The convention was a great success, bringing together more than 170 medical students from all three schools. Young doctors had an opportunity to connect with one another and senior doctors in the profession, such as Director of Medical Services A/Prof Benjamin Ong from the MOH, and Emeritus Consultant Prof Low Cheng Hock and Dr Kumaran Rasappan from Tan Tock Seng Hospital.

Being a part of the SMA family has given me many opportunities to serve and advance our professional community. I started as an SMA student member in 2013. In 2017, I had the opportunity to organise SMA’s first convention for medical students from the three medical schools. More than 170 medical students gathered to hear from and exchange views with established doctors. Such learning experiences are invaluable in broadening our personal and professional skills, and I’m grateful to have joined SMA.

MR IVAN LOW
Chairperson, SMA National Medical Students’ Convention 2017

We continued to discuss matters that will affect the future practice of junior doctors. Our SMA DIT Committee, engaged residency committee representatives from the three sponsoring institutions and other junior doctors of the profession on a quarterly basis, discussing topics such as types of training opportunities and manpower needs in an ever-changing healthcare landscape. The Association and its committees hope to maintain the collaborative nature of our advocacy work, as resolving our challenges swiftly and amicably benefits all parties in the industry.

In addition, we provided a variety of academic resources and financial support for SMA members who were DITs. Graduates who converted their complimentary Student Membership to Ordinary Membership upon graduation received a membership conversion pack, with a digital copy of the SMA House Officer’s Handbook containing tips on housemanship. We also disbursed financial aid; the SMA-Lee Foundation Awards rewarded exemplary achievements by Duke-NUS Medical School students, while the SMA Medical Students’ Assistance Fund supported over 230 underprivileged medical students from all three medical schools.

UNITING THE PROFESSION

Recognising that today’s healthcare sector relies heavily on team-based dynamics, SMA encourages interaction and networking across generations of doctors through our social activities and groups. In 2017, we held the SMA Annual Dinner, Members’ Appreciation Nite, Inter-Hospital Soccer Tournament and Tag Heuer Watch Appreciation Networking Event, bringing together DITs, senior doctors and SMA’s partners to promote collegiality and camaraderie through good food and wine, an entertaining movie premiere screening, friendly competition on the pitch and appreciation of timepieces, respectively. The number of Sensory Interest Groups (SIGs) that we support increased to 16 with the inclusion of the SMA Women’s Soccer team, led by Dr Priyanka Rajendram. Our members can now pursue another sporting interest with their colleagues. We hope that the SMA Women’s Soccer team, along with the other SIGs, will have a chance to represent the Association and emerge victorious at the 2018 Inter-Professional Games.

With the increasing workload, we are aware that many doctors may have trouble keeping up with professional matters. Hence, we have tried our best to disseminate information about matters that impact you and your practice through our various platforms, such as the SMA website, email mailers and our Facebook group. Some topics that came up in 2017 included issues related to managed care, the MOH Private Hospitals and Medical Clinics Act’s regulation survey, and ways in which members can meet the CME joint requirements before the mass practising certificate renewal in 2017.

SMA has been an integral part of my journey in medicine since I became one of the first SMA student members. I converted to ordinary member in 2007 and have always thought my subscription is well worth it, because I am supporting an organisation that speaks up for doctors and represents our profession without fear or favour. I’m now part of SMA’s DIT Committee, representing junior doctors on a wide variety of issues from night calls to residency matters. DITs face much stress and uncertainty amid the seismic changes in postgraduate medical education over the past decade. Our committee has representation from all the hospitals and has firsthand information from junior doctors on training conditions and other matters – DITs serving DITs!

DR NG CHEW LIP
Member, SMA DIT Committee
SUPPORTING DOCTORS

In a 2016 SMA membership survey, most of the respondents said they were interested in hiring healthcare personnel who underwent our clinic assistant training course. After the launch of the SMA Clinic Assistant Train and Place Programme in November 2016, we continued our efforts to provide good, efficient support staff for your clinics through employability camps, work trials and an introductory skills course. Thanks to our collaborations with doctors, clinic managers, course graduates and our partner, the Employment and Employability Institute (e2i), we have trained 103 clinic assistants over a one-year period and successfully placed more than 50% of them in clinics.

The SMA eMarket portal was also born in 2017. We embarked on its development after more than 60% of our members expressed interest in a central e-procurement platform for medical supplies in the 2016 survey. It is now accessible through your online membership portal and allows you and your clinic staff to place and track orders with various suppliers more efficiently, in real time. Close to 1,000 members have explored the SMA eMarket for the latest medical devices and market rates, and many have made successful transactions since its launch in October through various promotional campaigns run by our suppliers and SMA.

ETHICS CONSULTATION

The healthcare landscape is constantly evolving and we understand the challenges that members may face in their medical practice. Members have sought advice from the SMA Council and SMA Ethics Committee on ethical problems that they encountered in their practice.

PATIENT EDUCATION & ADVOCACY

We recognise that a good doctor-patient relationship is fundamental to the practice of medicine. Part of our role as a medical association is to speak up for the rights of patients, empower them to make informed decisions concerning their health, as well as educate through public talks and the media. In 2017, we focused our attention on several key events.

ADVOCATING FOR PATIENT PRIVACY RIGHTS

The National Electronic Health Record (NEHR) system has been an issue closely followed by SMA since its inception. On realisation that the medical records of patients who opt out of the NEHR would still reside in the NEHR, SMA highlighted to MOH our concerns about patient privacy, including the right of patients to be left alone and to make decisions about how personal information is shared; the need for doctors to respect patients’ right to privacy and dignity, as stipulated in the SMC Ethical Code and Ethical Guidelines; and the right of patients to be given the option to forbid their information from being uploaded to the NEHR. MOH has since amended its stance, acknowledging that some patients prefer not to have their information uploaded to the NEHR. MOH is considering an additional option, where patient records will not be stored in the NEHR.

PROOF OF PATIENT CONSENT

To protect patients’ interests, we spoke up on the issue of patient consent for the release of medical reports to third parties. In a letter to the General Insurance Association of Singapore, we reminded insurers that proof of patient consent was needed before patients’ medical reports can be released to a third party such as an insurance company.

MEDIATION

We believe that not every patient complaint against a doctor needs to be escalated to the SMC, as some issues between the patient and doctor are a result of miscommunication. This is where we step in to mediate by providing a listening ear to the patient and seeking clarifications from the doctor involved, resolving the misunderstanding before the doctor-patient relationship becomes irreparable. We have seen a steady drop in the number of official patient complaints, largely because some patients had withdrawn their complaints after our initial intervention. In 2017, we handled seven patient complaints, a considerable drop from a high of 34 cases in 2012.

MEDICAL ALERT

The Medik Awas programme was started in 1970 with the aim to prevent medical mishaps among members of the public through the issuance of cards and amulets that alert medical and dental personnel of their specific health problems and allergies. In 2017, we issued 180 Medik Awas cards and amulets.
58TH SMA COUNCIL 2017/2018

**OUR PEOPLE, OUR ASSETS**

---

**DR WONG TIEN HUA**  
President  
Family physician in private practice  
Council member since 2004; SMA spokesperson  
Committee: Administration; Doctors-in-Training; Singapore Medical Week 2017; SMA Pte Ltd

---

**DR BENNY LOO KAI GUO**  
Honorary Treasurer  
Paediatrician in public practice  
Council member since 2014  
Committee: Administration; Future Finance workgroup; Property; Membership; Doctors-in-Training; SMA Pte Ltd

---

**DR TAN TZE LEE**  
1st Vice President  
Family physician in private practice  
Council member since 2013  
Committee: Administration; Singapore Medical Week 2017; SMA News Editorial Board; Complaints; Property

---

**ADJ PROF TAN SZE WEE**  
2nd Vice President  
Director at research agency  
Council member since 1996  
Committee: Administration; Singapore Medical Week 2017; SMA Pte Ltd; SMA Charity Fund

---

**DR TAMMY CHAN TENG MUI**  
Family physician in private practice  
Council member since 2007  
Committee: Administration; Private Practice; Membership; SMA Annual Dinner 2018

---

**DR NG CHEE KWAN**  
Honorary Assistant Treasurer  
Urologist in private practice  
Council member since 2014  
Committee: Administration; Private Practice; Medik Awards

---

**DR LIM KHENG CHOON**  
Honorary Secretary  
Diagnostic radiologist in public practice  
Council member since 2013; SMA spokesperson  
Committee: Administration; Membership; Doctors-in-Training; Property; SMA Charity Fund; SMA Pte Ltd

---

**A/PROF CHIN JING JIH**  
Honorary Assistant Secretary  
Geriatrician in public practice  
Council member since 2002, past SMA President (2012–2015)  
Committee: Property; SMA Pte Ltd, SMA CMEP

---

**DR CHONG YEH WOEI**  
Family physician in private practice  
Council member since 1998, past SMA President (2009–2012)  
Committee: Future Finance workgroup; Property; Private Practice; Doctors-in-Training; Membership; SMA Pte Ltd; Fitness to Drive

---

**DR ANANTHAM DEVANAND**  
Honorary Assistant Secretary  
Respiratory and critical care physician in public practice  
Council member since 2014  
Committee: Administration; Complaints; Ethics; SMA CMEP

---

**DR DANIEL LEE HSIEH CHIEH**  
Public health physician in public sector  
Council member since 2012  
Committee: Ethics; Property; Membership

---

**DR LEE PHENG SOON**  
Family physician in private practice  
Committee: Future Finance workgroup; Professional Indemnity; SMA Trust Fund

---

**DR LEE YIK VOON**  
Family physician in private practice  
Council member since 2010  
Committee: Ethics; SMA Charity Fund; SMA Pte Ltd

---

**ADJ PROF NIGEL TAN CHUN KIAT**  
Public health physician in Ministry Council member since 2014  
Committee: Singapore Medical Week 2017

---

**DR TOH CHOON LAI**  
Orthopaedic surgeon in private practice  
Council member since 2007  
Committee: Complaints

---

**DR WONG CHIANG YIN**  
Public health physician in private sector  
Council member since 1995, past SMA President (2006–2009)  
Committee: Future Finance workgroup; Property; SMA Charity Fund

---

**DR BERTHA WOON YNG YNG**  
General surgeon in private practice  
Council member since 2007  
Committee: Professional Indemnity; SMA CMEP; SMA Pte Ltd

---

Up to February 2018, a total of 10 council meetings were convened to discuss the business and affairs of the Association.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Attendance</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Attendance</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Attendance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dr Wong Tien Hua</td>
<td>10/10</td>
<td>Dr Tammy Chan Teng Mui</td>
<td>8/10</td>
<td>A/Prof Nigel Tan Choon Kiat</td>
<td>8/10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr Tan Tze Lee</td>
<td>7/10</td>
<td>Dr Chong Yuk Foo</td>
<td>5/10</td>
<td>Dr Choon parcels</td>
<td>8/10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adj Prof Tan Sze Wee</td>
<td>8/10</td>
<td>Dr Chong Yuk Foo</td>
<td>8/10</td>
<td>Dr Tan Yia Soon</td>
<td>3/10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr Lim Kheng Choon</td>
<td>8/10</td>
<td>Dr Daniel Lee Hsien Chieh</td>
<td>9/10</td>
<td>Dr Toh Choon Lai</td>
<td>5/10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr Anantham Devanand</td>
<td>8/10</td>
<td>Dr Lee Pheng Soon</td>
<td>5/10</td>
<td>Dr Wong Chiang Yew</td>
<td>7/10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr Benny Loo Kai Guo</td>
<td>9/10</td>
<td>Dr Lee Yik Voon</td>
<td>10/10</td>
<td>Dr Bertha Woon Yng Yng</td>
<td>9/10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr Ng Chee Kwan</td>
<td>8/10</td>
<td>Dr Noorul Fa'at Athir</td>
<td>3/10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Council members who were absent from council meetings either were overseas or had sent their apologies.*
STANDING COMMITTEES AND REPRESENTATIVES

STANDING COMMITTEES
The President and Honorary Secretary are ex-officio of all committees.

Administration Committee
Dr Wong Tien Hua, Chairperson
Dr Tan Tze Lee, Vice Chairperson
Prof Tan San Soon, Secretary
Dr Lim Kheng Choon, Deputy Chairperson
Dr Benny Loo Guo, Vice Chairperson
Dr Ananthan Devanand
Dr Ng Chee Kwan

Editorial Board – Singapore Medical Journal
A/Prof Poh Kian Keong, Editor
Adj A/Prof Ang Ting Leong, Deputy Editor
Prof Mahesh Chooliar, Deputy Editor
Prof Wilfred CG Feh, Advisor
Prof Teo Eng Kiong, Advisor

Speciality Editors
Dr Daphne Ang Shih Wen
Dr Chong Tat Chong
Dr Khaw Boon Tong
Dr Daniel Lee Hsien Chieh
A/Prof Lim Yuan Tang
Dr Andrew Pan Bing Siong
Dr Lawrence Tan Wei Meng
Dr Tham Tat Yuen
Mr T Thirmothy

Ex-Officio Members of all Committees.

Dr Anantham Devanand, Deputy Executive Director
A/Prof Gerald Chua, Executive Director
Prof Paul Tambyah, Advisor

A/Prof Cheong Pak Yean, Secretary
Dr Luke Low Sher Guan (from Jul '17 )
Dr Anantham Devanand (Alternate)
A/Prof Chin Jing Jih
A/Prof Tan Sze Wee, Chairperson
Exec Professional Directors
Dr Chong Tat Chong
Dr Dione Tan Yuen Lan
Dr Allen Wong AK Loon
Mr Woe Siew Bock
Dr Fabian Yap Kok Pong
Mr Noel Yeo (from Feb '17 )

SMA Charity Fund Board of Directors
Prof Wong Tien Hua, Chairperson
Ms Ng Koh Choon, Secretary
Dr Tan Yew Ghee, Director
Dr Lim Siow Guan, Director
Dr Suresh Kumar (from Jul '17 )
Dr Lim Eng Kiong Tan (from Jun '17 )
Dr Tham Tat Yuen (from Jul '17 )
Dr Bertha Woon Yung Yng

SMA Trust Fund Board of Trustees
Dr Lee Pheng Soon, Chairperson
Dr Tan Yew Ghee, Deputy Chairperson
Dr Tan Kio Suk, Treasurer
Dr Cheong Pak Yean

Future Finance Workgroup
Dr Tan Min Yuan
Dr Hoo Yew Koong
Dr Chong Tze Koon
Dr Tan Min Yuan

ORGANISATIONS UNDER SMA’S MANAGEMENT 2017/2018

SMA Charity Fund
Board of Directors
Prof Wong Tien Hua, Chairperson
Ms Ng Koh Choon, Secretary
Dr Tan Yew Ghee, Director
Dr Lim Siow Guan, Director
Dr Suresh Kumar (from Jul '17 )
Dr Lim Eng Kiong Tan (from Jun '17 )
Dr Tham Tat Yuen (from Jul '17 )
Dr Bertha Woon Yung Yng

LKCMedicine-NHG Centre for Primary Health Care & Innovation Steering Committee
Dr Wong Tien Hua

MMS Honorary Editorial Board
Dr Lee Pheng Soon

MOM Workplace Safety & Health (Healthcare) Committee
Dr Wiong Tien Hua

National Resuscitation Council
A/Prof Teo Eng Kiong

Singapore Anti-Narcotic Association
Dr Thomas Lea Koen

SMA-APJ Joint Committee
Dr Lee Pheng Soon
Dr Lee Yik Voon

The Court Fund Limited, Board of Trustees & Board of Directors
Prof Low Chong Hock

The Court Fund Limited, SMA Institutional Representative
A/Prof Chin Jing Jih

Medical Association of South East Asian Nations (MASEAN) Council
Dr Lee Pheng Soon, Secretary General
Dr Tan Min Yuan, Chairperson

MOH National Ethics Capability Committee
A/Prof Chin Jing Jih
Dr Chong Tze Koon
Dr Wiong Tien Hua

MOH Singapore Medical Week 2017
FutureMed 2017

Medical Association of South East Asia (MASEAN) Council (from Sep '17)
Prof Teo Eng Kiong

Royal College of Physicians

Singapore Medical Association

Medical Council of Singapore

SMA Trust Fund
Board of Trustees
Dr Lee Pheng Soon, Chairperson
Dr Tan Yew Ghee, Deputy Chairperson
Dr Tan Kio Suk, Treasurer
Dr Cheong Pak Yean

SMA Charities
Board of Directors
Prof Wong Tien Hua, Chairperson
Ms Ng Koh Choon, Secretary
Dr Tan Yew Ghee, Director
Dr Lim Siow Guan, Director
Dr Suresh Kumar (from Jul '17 )
Dr Lim Eng Kiong Tan (from Jun '17 )
Dr Tham Tat Yuen (from Jul '17 )
Dr Bertha Woon Yung Yng

SMA Charities Fund
Board of Directors
Prof Wong Tien Hua, Chairperson
Ms Ng Koh Choon, Secretary
Dr Tan Yew Ghee, Director
Dr Lim Siow Guan, Director
Dr Suresh Kumar (from Jul '17 )
Dr Lim Eng Kiong Tan (from Jun '17 )
Dr Tham Tat Yuen (from Jul '17 )
Dr Bertha Woon Yung Yng
The SMA Secretariat, led by Executive Director Dr Lee Yik Voon and Chief Administrator Mr Martin Ho, supports the work of the SMA Council and Committees, and serves our Membership. The 24-member strong Secretariat (as at 31 December 2017) is broadly divided into four divisions – Membership Services and Partnership Development; Publications; Academy; and Corporate Services, which includes the SMA Charity Fund.

Toward a high-performance Secretariat that partners the Council in building an association that is relevant and important to our Membership – that’s the impetus for our work every day!

MR MARTIN HO
Chief Administrator

Every day at SMA is exciting – at the micro-level, listening to diverse feedback and assisting members with possible solutions; at the macro-level, fusing individual feedback into a coherent advocacy effort. I’m really lucky to be given this opportunity to make my small contribution to our big team effort for the past nine years.

LEE SZE YONG
Manager, Council Support

I’ve learnt so much since joining SMA in 2011. Besides providing administrative support for indemnity renewals and workshops, I also appreciate the opportunity to apply my skills as a life support instructor for SMA’s BCLS and CPR+AED courses.

LIN SHIRONG
Executive, Office Administration & Indemnity

I’ve been with SMA since 1996. From my early years with the Association, I’ve been ingrained with a strong member ethic and I’ve never forgotten that our members are the reason we’re here.

NOOR AZLIENA BTE SAMHUDI
Senior Executive, Membership Services & Partnership Development

Having joined SMA only in 2016, I’m still a newbie in the team! I’ve found the range and depth of courses that SMA conducts for doctors to be both thorough and practical. I’m glad to contribute to our members’ learning journey.

JASMINE SOO
Executive, Academy

To view the full annual report, financial statements and other supplementary materials, please visit https://www.sma.org.sg/ar or scan the following QR Code.

STRONGER TOGETHER