57th
ANNUAL
REPORT
2016/
2017

ENGAGING LEADING SHAPING

Singapore Medical Association
For Doctors, For Patients
About

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

About the Cover

The tri-colour ribbons represent the key roles that SMA plays in engaging policymakers and our members, leading the medical profession, and shaping the healthcare environment, for the good of doctors and patients. The weaving of the three ribbons into a unified band signifies SMA’s strong commitment to its roles, which are tightly woven into the fabric of the organisation.
PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

The Singapore Medical Association (SMA) slogan, ‘For Doctors, For Patients’, launched at the 2015 SMA Annual Dinner, reflects our recognition that the doctor-patient relationship is fundamental to the interaction between doctors and patients, and lies at the heart of any scientific revelation, technological innovation, policy decision and business practice that affects healthcare.

Patients today are faced with increased options, as innovations in science and technology allow the early detection and diagnosis of disease, empowering patients with more information. This is both a blessing and a burden. Patients still need their doctors as healthcare experts to help them navigate the plethora of devices and data in the market. Hence, having a good doctor-patient relationship is critical; it provides the framework for problem-solving, diagnosis and management. In the face of uncertainty, the doctor and patient can engage in the process of shared decision-making to make the choice together.

At the same time, healthcare policy and business arrangements continue to evolve in Singapore, including the introduction of the revised Singapore Medical Council (SMC) Ethical Code and Ethical Guidelines (ECEG) in 2016, changes to the Health Products Act and review of the Private Hospitals and Medical Clinics Act. The issue of escalating healthcare costs was highlighted last year when the Life Insurance Association, Singapore released its industry survey, leading to the formation of the Health Insurance Task Force to look into how healthcare costs can be contained. The issue of business practices and financial arrangements by managed care organisations (MCOs) and third-party administrators (TPAs) was also brought to the attention of both professionals and the public.

It is not difficult to see how healthcare policy and ethical guidelines directly affect the way doctors interact with their patients. Business practices work in more subtle ways, especially when financial considerations result in ethical conflicts between for-profit healthcare and the patient’s best interests, eroding the trust that is critical between doctors and patients. Given all these developments, the doctor-patient relationship continues to remain relevant now, more than ever.

SMA started our work year with an analysis of the results from the Managed Care Survey 2015, conducted by the SMA Workgroup on Managed Care and the College of Family Physicians Singapore. The purpose of this survey was to better understand the business environment that general practitioners (GPs) face. It found that the performance of MCOs had a high degree of variability and that dissatisfaction with MCOs appeared to have worsened over the last ten years. The results were published in the May 2016 edition of SMA News. At the SMA Annual Dinner on 14 May 2016, I announced the results of the survey and urged our GP colleagues to stop signing up with managed care schemes that are not equitable, terminate contracts that take too long to reimburse the GP, and avoid agreements that burden the GP with excessive administrative restrictions and exclusions.

Perspectives on managed care received further elaboration in August 2016, in a dedicated issue of SMA News that discussed the various benefits and challenges of managed care schemes. We raised the ethical issue of commission payment and fee-splitting by the medical profession, and the problem of lack of transparency of MCOs and TPAs. The issue of fee arrangements between doctors and MCOs/TPAs had been separately raised to SMC earlier in the year. SMC responded in a letter dated 8 September 2016, stating that doctors must not pay fees that are so high as to constitute ‘fee-splitting’ or ‘fee-sharing’, or which impact their ability to provide the required level of care. The fee paid must not be based primarily on the services doctors provide or the fees they collect from patients. SMC stated that doctors are to continue to remain professionally responsible for the patient’s well-being, regardless of the terms of any contract. SMC’s position has since been further explained in its advisory dated 13 December 2016, and in the 2016 edition of the SMC ECEG and Handbook on Medical Ethics.

As the national association representing doctors in Singapore, SMA will continue to highlight examples of unfair contracts and questionable terms that put our members at a disadvantage and threaten good clinical care. We will keep on engaging the government and stakeholders on behalf of our members when necessary. For instance, the SMA Advisory on Managed Care Contracts, issued in 2009, will be updated to reflect the changes in the SMC ECEG.

During the year, SMA also participated in the Health Insurance Task Force, an industry-led initiative chaired by Ms Mimi Ho of Regulatory Professionals Pte Ltd, along with representatives from the Life Insurance Association, Singapore and the Consumers Association of Singapore. The initiative is supported and represented by the Ministry of Health and the Monetary Authority of Singapore. The Health Insurance Task Force was formed in February 2016 to evaluate the issue of increasing pressures on integrated plan premiums in Singapore and make recommendations to moderate the escalation of future premiums. Its final report was published on 13 October 2016 with four broad recommendations that the Government, industry and consumers should address in the near term.

Singapore Medical Week by SMA and FutureMed 2017 will be a new highlight in the Association’s suite of activities for our members in the second half of 2017. The inaugural Singapore Medical Week, a trade event and conference, aims to become the focal point for stakeholders in the Singapore healthcare industry, facilitating critical discussions on vital topics of current importance and forecasting future health trends, unique ideas and new innovations. FutureMed 2017 will be a platform to showcase current developments in healthcare technology and explore the impact of future trends, such as big data. This event will enable both medical professionals and the public to keep abreast of the latest developments and innovations in healthcare.

SMA will continue to look for opportunities to bring fresh perspectives and creative content to our members through collaboration with industry experts, healthcare institutions and relevant external parties. We seek your continued membership as we work for the good of our profession and patients in the year ahead.

Dr Wong Tien Hua
President
**HONORARY SECRETARY’S REPORT**

**Engaging Leading Shaping. This is the tagline of our Annual Report this year, a theme that is consistently reflected in the work we have done in 2016 and in the SMA slogan unveiled in 2015, ‘For Doctors, For Patients’**

**Engaging our members**
One of our aims in 2016 was to further engage our members and communicate the work of the Association. Our Membership team and the SMA Secretariat have shared with members the continued efforts of the SMA Council and the broader impact of our work on the medical fraternity. In SMA News, we started a monthly column that summarises some of the key engagements SMA had with various stakeholders. Constant updates to our website’s home and ‘Our Voice’ pages gave members the convenience of reading the Association’s views and advisories in one location. We also reviewed our membership portal and Facebook account so that they can continue to be effective avenues from which members get the information they need.

We would like to encourage our readers to utilise these touchpoints for updates on the work of SMA. We will continue to engage our members under the leadership of the Council, who are elected members of the profession and volunteers in this role in the Association.

**Leading the profession**
At the SMA Annual Dinner in May 2016, we conferred the SMA Honorary Membership on Adj Prof Lim Lean Huat, Prof Ong Yong Yau, and Prof Balasubramaniam Ponnampalam. They join other highly respected and esteemed members of the profession who have distinguished themselves in public life or rendered meritorious service to SMA or the medical profession.

SMA has exercised its leadership role through engagement with various stakeholders on significant professional matters throughout the year, on behalf of the profession at large. We started the year educating our members on medical indemnity issues, and understanding their views on managed care through the Managed Care Survey 2015. In the area of advocacy, we sought the views of the Singapore Medical Council (SMC) on fees to third-party administrators (TPAs), and received a reply to our letter in the latter half of the year. This position was encapsulated in the SMC Ethical Code and Ethical Guidelines (ECEG) 2016 and Handbook on Medical Ethics (HEME).

During the year, we also advocated issues such as caring for the doctor (such as how doctors can look after themselves), represented members in issues faced by doctors-in-training (such as National Service leave affecting residency training), deliberated on escalating integrated shield plan premiums and claim costs (through the Health Insurance Task Force), and many more. At the SMA Lecture 2016, we were privileged to hear from Prof Sir Sabaratnam Arulkuamar on the topic of ‘Health and Human Rights’, where he encouraged members of the profession to become advocates of health and human rights for the benefit of our patients, regardless of backgrounds and differences.

**Shaping the healthcare environment**
SMA has played an active part in shaping the healthcare environment. The SMA Council receives requests on some major developments, including the SMC ECEG 2016 and HME, ethical considerations behind fee payment to TPAs and managed care organisations, Health Products Act, Private Hospitals and Medical Clinics Act, Public Health Preparedness Clinic Guidelines, Health Insurance Task Force, and others. More information on our representation and advocacy work can be found on page 15 of the Annual Report.

The SMA Secretariat, led by Executive Director Dr Lee Yik Voon, supports the work of the SMA Council and its Committees. The Secretariat comprises a total of 24 paid staff as at 31 December 2016. Our Chief Administrator, Mr Martin Ho, oversees the day-to-day operations of the Secretariat, which is broadly divided into four divisions – Membership, Publications, Courses and Corporate Services, and the SMA Charity Fund.

The SMA Council, Committees and Secretariat will continue to work hard for our members and patients. We would like to express our deepest appreciation to every single one of our volunteers who have, in many ways, helped the Association to make an impact. The hours and resources committed to the work of SMA to benefit the profession as a whole is one key factor for the success of this Association.

**COUNCIL MEETING ATTENDANCE**

Up to February 2017, a total of 10 council meetings were convened to discuss the business and affairs of the Association. The attendance record of the meetings is as follows:

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<th>NAME</th>
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**Note:**
✓ Present  * Overseas  # Absent with apologies

We all have a part to play for SMA continue to be the representative voice of the profession. We seek your continued endorsement through your membership and that of your peers. Together, we will further the collective interests of our profession – For Doctors, For Patients.
Standing Committees and Representatives
57th SMA Council 2016/2017

Standing Committees
The President and Honorary Secretary are ex-offices of all committees.

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Dr Teh Cheon Lai, Vice Chairperson
Adj Prof Tan Zu Sue, Vice Chairperson
Dr Daniel Lee Hsein Chieh
Dr Tammy Chan Teng Mui
Dr Lim Khang Choon
Dr Benny Loi Kai Doo

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A/Prof Mahesh Chandrak, Deputy Editor
Prof Wee MD Cuh, Publisher
Prof Tan Eng Kuong, Advisor

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Dr Chan Yiong Huak
A/Prof Tan Su Ming (from Jan '17)
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Dr Ramani NV
Dr Pwee Keng Ho
Dr Daniel Lee Hsien Chieh
Dr Toh Choon Lai, Vice Chairperson
Dr Benedict Tan
Dr Ong Hean Yee (till Dec '16)
Dr Abdul Razak Jr Omar
Dr Liau Kui Hin

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Dr Chong Yeh Woei, Chairperson
Dr Colin Tan Jingxian
Dr Crystal Soh Harn Wei
Dr Sim Hui Wen (from Dec '16)
Dr Mo Yin

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57th SMA COUNCIL 2016/2017

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Ms Kuah Boon Theng
Dr Daniel Lee Hsein Chieh

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Dr Tammy Chan Teng Mui
Dr Cheng Yeh Wee
Dr Lee Yik Yoon

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Prof Paul Tampuboro, Advisor
Dr Wong Tien Hua, Advisor
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Dr Sean Ho Wei Loong
Mr Mo Yin
Dr Ng Chee Kwan
Dr Ng Chee Kwan
Dr Sathish Melak
Mr Mo Yin
Dr Chua Huai Yang (from Dec '16)
Dr Sim Hui Wen (from Dec '16)
Dr Crystal Soh Harn Wei
Dr Colin Tan Jingxian
Dr Tan Meng Yuan

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Dr Benny Lee Kai Guo, Vice Chairperson

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A/Prof Teh Han Chong, Advisor
Dr Chua Zhi Ying (from Mar '16)
Dr Jayanth Viley
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Dr Jonathan Tan
Dr Jimmy Teo

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Dr Tan Tze Lee
Dr Dinara Tan Yuen Lan
Dr Allan Wong Ai Loon
Dr Wee Siew Bock
Dr Fabian Yap Kok Pong

Forums/ Conferences
Dr William Pang Sieng
Dr Lawrence Tan Wei Meng
Dr Tham Tian Yuen
Dr T Thirmourthy

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Dr Daniel Lee Hsien Chieh

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Dr Cheng Yeh Wee
Dr Lim Khang Choon
Dr Tan Tze Lee
Dr Wong Chiang Yen

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Dr Tan Tze Lee, Secretary
Dr Tan Toei Soon, Treasurer
Dr Pang Choon Pak, Vice President

Representatives of SMA
2016/2017
MOH Advisory Committee on Clinical Management of Dengue
Dr Wong Tien Hua

MOH Diabetes Prevention & Care Taskforce
Dr Wong Tien Hua

MOH Medical Advisory Panel on Driving
Dr Cheng Yeh Wee, Chairperson

MOH National Ethics Capability Committee
A/Prof Anantham Devanand (Alternate)

MOH Sub-Committee on GP Communications & Engagement, Primary Care Action Plan Implementation Committee
Dr Wong Tien Hua

AMHS-AMS Joint Speciality Surveys (from Jan '17)
Dr Lim Khang Choon

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Dr Daniel Lee Hsien Chieh

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Dr Cheng Yeh Wee
Dr Lim Khang Choon
Dr Tan Tze Lee
Dr Wong Chiang Yen

Organisations Under SMA's Governance 2014/2017
SMA Charity Fund
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Mr Calvin Lim Ming Wan
Dr Daniel Lee Hsien Chieh

Future Finance Workgroup (from Jan '17)
Dr Tammy Chan Teng Mui, Chairperson
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Dr Lim Khang Choon
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Dr Lim Khang Choon
Dr Tan Tze Lee
Dr Wong Chiang Yen

SMA Trust Fund Board of Trustees
Dr Liew Poh Soon, Chairperson
Dr Tan Tze Lee, Secretary
Dr Tan Toei Soon, Treasurer
Dr Pang Choon Pak, Vice President

Life Insurance Association, Health Insurance Task Force
Dr Wong Tien Hua
Dr Wong Chiang Yin

LKC Medicine – NHCC Centre for Primary Health Care Research & Innovation Steering Committee
Dr Wong Tien Hua

MIMS Honorary Editorial Advisory Board
Dr Liew Poh Soon

MDM Workplace Safety & Health (Healthcare) Committee
Dr Wong Sin Yew

MSF Office of the Public Guardian – Committee on Assessment of Mental Capacity
A/Prof Chin Jing Jih
Dr Anantham Devanand (Alternate)

MSF Office of the Public Guardian – LPA Care Review Committee
Dr Anantham Devanand

National Reconciliation Council
Dr Lim Swee Hang

Singapore Anti-Narcotics Association
Dr Choon Ming

SMA-MAPI Joint Committee
Dr Liew Poh Soon
Dr Liew Yik Yoon

Medical Association of South East Asia Nations (MASEAN) Council
Dr Wong Tien Hua, Chairperson (till May '16)
Dr Lee Yik Yoon, Secretary General
Dr Daniel Lee Hsein Chieh, Deputy Secretary General (till May '16)
Dr Tammy Chan Teng Mui, Treasurer

MASEAN Councillor
Dr Wong Tien Hua, President

IDSI-SMA Joint Committee (Memorandum of Understanding on Publicity Guidelines & Code of Ethics on Hospital Promotion)
Dr Chong Yeh Wee
Dr Lee Yik Yoon
Dr Tammy Chan Teng Mui

The Confederation of Medical Associations in Asia and Oceania (CMAAO)
Dr Chong Yeh Wee, Vice Chairperson of Council
Dr Bertha Woon Yng Yng, CAMAO Councillor

The Confederation of Medical Associations in Asia and Oceania (CMAAO)
Dr Chong Yeh Wee, Vice Chairperson of Council
Dr Bertha Woon Yng Yng, CAMAO Councillor

SMA Speakers
Dr Wong Tien Hua
Dr Daniel Lee Hsein Chieh

SMA Honorary Legal Advisors
Ms Khoo Boon Thong, Legal Clinic LLC
Mr Luk Gian Keong, Donsky & Davidson LLP
Mr Matthew Soo Kean Kwang, Leo & Lee
Mr Edwin Teng, Allianz & Gottlieb

Professional Auditors
Krston David Young PAC

Media & Communications
Ms Nalini Nadus, MSQO Pty Ltd
In 2016, Singapore moved into a period of economic slowdown, impacting many sectors. We are mindful of the economic headwinds and have been watchful of the expenditure incurred by the Association. Over the past few years, we have constantly reviewed our expenditure to ensure that wastage is kept at a minimum. SMA aims to create value for members with our existing resources, through subsidised continuing medical education courses, events, collaterals and discounted resources.

Our main source of income continues to be our partners, in particular, from administrative services we provide to indemnity providers, as well as publicity revenue through our publications and email marketing. The resources earned from external sources allow the Association to function without having to increase the membership fee, which has been kept at $200 (before applicable goods and services tax) since 2007.

In 2017, there will be changes to the procurement of indemnity scheme for doctors working in restructured hospitals. This change is expected to have a significant impact on the overall income and surplus of the Association for the year. In response, the Council has appointed me to head a workgroup to look into future finance opportunities and challenges as SMA seeks to explore alternative and new sources of income for the near-to-medium term. In terms of our budget, we are aiming for 2017 to be a break-even year and have been exploring various options that could allow the Association to revert to its surplus position. Despite these adjustments, we aim to keep the membership fee unchanged for as long as possible and to create new value by providing services that will benefit our members. We seek your support in these new areas when they are implemented in the coming months and years.

The Property Committee, which was set up in 2015 to explore options to purchase or rent property for investment or operational purposes, continued to carry out its work in 2016. From our discussions with the Alumni Association, there are currently no further updates on the existing rental lease of the SMA office in Alumni Association. The current lease is set to expire in 2018, in line with the expiry of the master lease held by Alumni Association.

The uncertain investment climate in 2016 made it challenging for general investors to achieve a positive rate of return. Our investment committee, chaired by the Executive Director of Singapore Medical Association Pte Ltd, Adj Prof Tan Sze Wee, has monitored the situation well. Our investments, which are mainly made up of bonds and equities, made a positive return in 2016. Our annualised investment return of 2.95% since its inception in July 2008 is representative of our longer-term goal of providing a reasonable return on investment in a low-risk portfolio.

The SMA Charity Fund (SMACF), set up in 2013 to carry out the charitable vision and work of the SMA, renewed its Institution of a Public Character status for another two years from December 2016. Last year, SMACF continued to provide support to needy medical students through bursaries and promote volunteerism amongst the profession. More information about SMACF can be found in the separate SMACF Annual Report 2016.

Our updated financial information can be found at www.sma.org.sg/membership, which provides a broad view of our sources of income and expenditure, in line with our aim to keep our membership updated about the financial management of the Association.

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With our eyes firmly set on the long-term financial sustainability of the Association, we had been prudent in financial matters, and are glad to report a surplus of $544,131 for the SMA Group (excluding SMACF), which will be set aside for future capital expenditure and operational needs. Our combined accumulated fund, which amounts to $7.4 million, is expected to sustain the work of the SMA Group even in times of unexpected decrease in income.

As SMA is a volunteer-led association to serve the profession, we welcome feedback from our members to help us do better. We would be glad to receive any suggestions that would support the financial sustainability of the SMA in the long run.

Dr Tammy Chan Teng Mui
Honorary Secretary

From Left to Right:
Dr Tammy Chan Teng Mui (Honorary Treasurer)
Dr Benny Lee Kai Guo (Honorary Assistant Treasurer)
REPRESENTATION AND ADVOCACY

As Singapore’s national medical association, SMA takes a leading role in actively monitoring professional and ethical issues on behalf of its members and patients. Through diplomacy and public statements, SMA offers feedback and suggests alternatives to various agencies and bodies, in order to advocate the rights of doctors and the well-being of patients. With the support of the medical profession, SMA aims to shape a more inclusive and collaborative healthcare landscape in Singapore.

2016 HIGHLIGHTS

Singapore Medical Council (SMC) Ethical Code and Ethical Guidelines (ECEG)
- The SMC ECEG was officially issued on 14 October 2016 and took effect from 1 January 2017. Several of SMA’s recommendations were taken into consideration, including our feedback that the ECEG should be made more concise. The final ECEG is shorter and provides better clarity, with much of the previous content incorporated into a separate SMC Handbook on Medical Ethics. We take this opportunity to thank members who have provided feedback on this important document.

Managed Care
- The 2015 Managed Care survey results were published in SMA News May 2016 issue.
- The results showed that [a] a high degree of variability in performance existed among managed care organisations (MCOs), with some recording high levels of dissatisfaction; [b] the main area of dissatisfaction pertained to payment of fees; [c] the perceived restriction in choice of medication and specialist referrals may affect the quality of patient care; and [d] the trend of dissatisfaction has worsened over the last ten years. It was recommended that MCOs with low satisfaction rates should work with physician providers to improve the situation.
- In February 2016, SMA highlighted its concerns to SMC regarding: (a) MCOs that deduct excessive administrative fees from participating doctors; and (b) the restriction on patient referrals to panel specialists, even when the insurance plans allow for more options.
- SMC replied in September 2016, clarifying that “such fees must not be based primarily on the services doctors provide or the fees they collect from patients. SMC would deem unethical the sharing or splitting of fees with a referring doctor, merely for the privilege of being referred a patient, with no commensurate work done justifying such fees.”
- The Ministry of Health (MOH) replied to parliamentary questions on this topic in September and November 2016.
- In December 2016, SMC issued an advisory to clarify Guideline H3(7) of the ECEG and extended the date of compliance to 1 July 2017, providing doctors with an additional six months to make the necessary adjustments.
- In December 2016, the Ministry of Health (MOH) issued a joint opinion on Transactions with Managed Care or Third Party Administrators, to provide members with a possible way to comply with the ECEG. The three professional bodies also wrote in to The Straits Times Forum to clarify that our joint opinion is complementary to SMC’s advisory.

Medical Indemnity
- In February 2016, SMA highlighted its concerns to MOH regarding: (a) MCOs that deduct excessive administrative fees from participating doctors; and (b) the restriction on patient referrals to panel specialists, even when the insurance plans allow for more options. SMC replied in September 2016, clarifying that “such fees must not be based primarily on the services doctors provide or the fees they collect from patients. SMC would deem unethical the sharing or splitting of fees with a referring doctor, merely for the privilege of being referred a patient, with no commensurate work done justifying such fees.”
- In late 2016, SMA became aware that MOHH intended to engage a new medical indemnity provider to provide cover for all its public sector doctors. In November 2016, SMA met with representatives from Jardine Lloyd Thompson.

Ministry of Health
- In April 2016, SMA met with Director of Medical Services (DMS), A/Prof Benjamin Ong, to discuss various issues, including medical manpower and the SMC ECEG.
- In July 2016, SMA met with Permanent Secretary, Mr Chan Heng Kee, to discuss several issues, including managed care.
- In August 2016, SMA met with Minister of State, Dr Lam Pin Min, and A/Prof Benjamin Ong to discuss issues concerning the SMC ECEG and managed care.
- In September 2016, SMA met with Dr Lam Pin Min for a dialogue session regarding the implementation of mandatory itemised billing under the Community Health Assist Scheme (CHAS) and the publication of CHAS bill sizes.

Health Products Act (HPA)
- In October 2016, SMA met with Health Sciences Authority (HSA) to discuss the transition of regulatory control of pharmaceutical products in the Medicines Act to the control of therapeutic products in the HPA. SMA highlighted various concerns, specifically regarding new labelling requirements for compounded therapeutic products, as well as the potential impact on patient care and the healthcare landscape.
as implementation timeline and compliance costs.

- HSA subsequently informed SMA that doctors would have a period of six months (until 30 April 2017) to comply with the new requirements. HSA also issued a circular providing a summary of relevant changes.

Health Insurance Task Force (HITF)

- The HITF was formed in February 2016 to recommend measures to bring about a moderation in the escalation of health insurance premiums in Singapore.

- Chaired by Ms Mimi Ho, with representatives from the Life Insurance Association, Singapore, the Consumers Association of Singapore and SMA, the HITF was supported by MOH and the Monetary Authority of Singapore.

- The final report was published in October 2016, with the following recommendations: (a) introduce medical fee benchmarks or guidelines; (b) clarify existing processes to surface possible cases of inappropriate medical treatment; (c) enhance insurance procedures and product features; and (d) educate consumers.

Doctors-in-Training (DIT)

- The DIT committee highlighted to the Advisory Council on Community Relations in Defence that some trainees were unable to complete their residency training within the stipulated time frame, as they were fulfilling their National Service (NS) obligations at the same time; thus, for doctors who have NS requirements, completion of traineeship may be delayed, potentially jeopardising their career prospects.

- The Ministry of Defence (MINDEF) replied that (a) MINDEF will advise Unit Commanders to exercise more flexibility in managing NSmen undergoing residency, in terms of deferment, subject to the unit’s training requirement; and (b) MOH has advised the Designated Institutional Administrators to give advance notice of their in-camp training to their Programme Directors for advance planning.

Official comments and recommendations

- Dr Wong Tien Hua noted that the media related to AMD is due for review, since it has been in force for the past 20 years, and that there should also be public consultation to simplify the AMD procedures.

10 JUNE 2016

Doctors cry foul over ‘unfair’ practice of third-party agents

SMA President, Dr Wong Tien Hua, was able to comment on an ‘unfair’ practice of TPAs charging doctors an administrative fee ranging from 8% to 25% of a doctor’s professional fees for patient referrals. He cautioned that such practices can be interpreted as fee-splitting or commission payment, and may be against the best interest of patients. He also revealed that SMA is seeking clarification with SCM on this matter.

25 JULY 2016

Taking care of cancer patients ‘more stressful than in West’

The Straits Times

A two-year study documenting the physical, emotional and social well-being of Singaporean caregivers of cancer patients, which was e-published ahead of print in the Singapore Medical Journal in April 2016, was featured in The Straits Times. The study found that caregivers here, especially men, are more burdened and stressed compared to those in Western countries. The researchers hope that the study will lead to better support for caregivers by providing evidence of the challenges they face.

14–15 SEPTEMBER 2016

Revision of the SMC Ethical Code and Ethical Guidelines

Channel NewsAsia, The Business Times, TODAY

SMA President, Dr Wong Tien Hua, welcomed the revision of the ECEG and added that it is important to have the aims of SMA and SMC aligned to the needs of the society at large and for the good of all patients.

26 OCTOBER 2016

Private surgeons’ fees to be published

SMA President, Dr Wong Tien Hua, weighed in on MOH’s move to publish online the total operation fees for various surgical procedures performed in private hospitals. Dr Wong said that the SMA welcomes this move, as improved transparency allows patients to manage fee expectations for better peace of mind. However, he added that it is too early to tell if the move will impact healthcare costs.

10 OCTOBER 2016

IRAS recovers $1.8b from tax cheats in past five years

SMA has been mentioned as one of the key partners of the Inland Revenue Authority of Singapore in educating taxpayers about tax evasion. SMA has been conducting seminars on tax obligations in medical practice, targeted at clinic owners and representatives responsible for the preparation and filing of the Income Tax Return and other tax matters.

13 OCTOBER 2016

The Health Insurance Task Force

The Business Times, The Straits Times

Two representatives from the SMA are part of the 11-member Health Insurance Task Force that looks at the rising premium costs down, including having a set of guidelines for medical fees to allow better transparency, as well as clarifying the process through which insurers can raise treatment-related issues to the relevant authorities.

4 NOVEMBER 2016

Medicine, technology to the fore at Singapore Medical Week next year

TODAY, Lianhe Zaobao

Singapore Medical Week by SMA and FutureMed 2017, officially launched on 3 November 2016, was covered by several media. The conference cum expo, which is slated to take place in August 2017, seeks to bring together new scientific discoveries, advancements in technology and development in medical products for the betterment of medical care. The event will incorporate SMA’s annual medical convention and also feature talks for the public to improve medical literacy and encourage patients to take greater ownership of their healthcare.

13–14 DECEMBER 2016

Doctors barred from paying percentage of fees to 3rd-party agents

TODAY, Channel NewsAsia, Channel 8 TV, CNA Singapore Tonight

SMA welcomed IMDA’s advisory barring doctors from paying managed care organisations and TPAs fees that are calculated as a percentage of fees collected from their patients, from 1 July 2017. Dr Chong Yeh Woei, SMA’s Council Member and former President, opined that this move would allow greater transparency in fee structures, as the high costs associated with patient care should work only with TPAs that are prepared to be transparent with their fee structure. Dr Chong added that with this advice, the patient’s share of the healthcare dollar will go up, since he will get more value for his money.
THE HEART OF OUR WORK

In 2016, SMA Membership continued to develop initiatives to actualise the Association’s vision to empower doctors, in hopes of enabling them to take good care of their patients. More than 6,000 SMA Members started their year on a good note, renewing their membership with the Association by February last year. All SMA Members in good standing were eligible to take part in a lucky draw to win an Apple Watch, in an effort to recognise members’ unwavering support over the years.

The Association continued its active engagement of medical professionals, especially doctors-in-training (DITs) and medical students, to better grasp their concerns and support their needs in their respective fields. We also maintained various collaborations and partnerships with external healthcare and non-healthcare organisations for the benefit of our members.

Teaming up with members, for members
The SMA DIT Committee held quarterly meetings that were attended by residency committee chairpersons and specialty representatives from the three sponsoring institutions (SIs), namely National Healthcare Group, National University Health System and Singapore Health Services. Discussion topics included medical indemnity arrangements for DITs, manpower planning for various specialties, and reservist leave for male trainee doctors. These meetings provided an avenue for information sharing and a macro view of the current medical training across the three SIs. More importantly, the SMA DIT Committee strove to encourage synergy among DITs from the different healthcare clusters, as part of our advocacy for a healthy medical training environment.

As SMA believes in empowering future generations of doctors, we have been in constant conversation with student leaders from NUS Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine, Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine, Duke-NUS Medical School, Singapore Medical Society of Ireland (SMSI), Singapore Medical Society of Australia and New Zealand (SMSANZ), and Singapore Medical Society of the United Kingdom (SMSUK). SMA encouraged regular meetings and events to build stronger collegiality among these student leaders, who will be the pillars of Singapore medicine in future. With SMSI, SMSANZ and SMSUK, the SMA also hopes to keep these students updated on the local healthcare system and maintain their contact with the Singapore medical fraternity, so as to facilitate their assimilation when they return to practice.

As Singapore develops its healthcare manpower and processes to meet the growing demand for healthcare services, SMA also recognises that it is crucial for the sector to attract suitable healthcare support personnel and adopt efficient procedures. Hence, SMA sought feedback from some of its members who are private practitioners through an online survey in mid-2016, about how the Association could help to obtain the resources that they require. More than half of the SMA Members who responded to our survey highlighted the need for trained clinic assistants in their clinics and practices. Hence, the Association designed the SMA Clinic Assistant Train and Place Programme, which is intended to equip interested individuals with the basic skills required of a clinic assistant so that SMA Members would be able to hire them for their practice. SMA Members and their clinic managers had the option to either post their vacancies on an online portal or conduct face-to-face interviews with graduates from the SMA Clinic Assistant Introductory Skills Courses in November 2016 and January 2017 (see page 20).

Building strong partnerships
SMA has maintained strong collaborations with 13 professional and lifestyle promotional partners. UOB and SMA has cultivated a strong partnership over the years with the inception of the UOB-SMA Visa Platinum Card, which SMA Members could utilise to enjoy dining privileges and other benefits with perpetual fee waiver. Our chosen partners offer tangible and exclusive privileges that enhance different aspects of our members’ lives and further their interests. Some of them, including Jitron Pte Ltd Singapore, Munich Automobiles Pte Ltd, The Peak Singapore, UpToDate and John Wiley & Sons Singapore Pte Ltd, also provided limited-time promotions to SMA Members who were in good standing by February 2016.

SMA also partnered with other organisations in 2016 to secure attractive deals for products that are crucial to our members’ professional and personal lives. These promotional campaigns included a stethoscope trade-in exercise and a water-dispenser promotion, in collaboration with 3M, and a trade-in campaign for HEINE mini3000 combined diagnostic sets with Kingston Medical Supplies Pte Ltd.

From providing the ideal environment for increased collegiality among medical practitioners and students, to professional and lifestyle benefits through its partners, SMA has striven to ensure that our members have access to the various avenues and tools to enhance their professional and personal growth.

Finally, we thank our members for their strong and active participation, which has lent much-needed weight and value to all our work in 2016.
EMPOWERING THROUGH EDUCATION AND TRAINING

SMA CENTRE FOR MEDICAL ETHICS AND PROFESSIONALISM

2016 saw a leadership transition at the SMA Centre for Medical Ethics and Professionalism (SMA CMEP) to A/Prof Gerald Chua, who took over the role of Executive Director from Dr T Thirumoorthy. SMA and SMA CMEP marked the occasion by holding an appreciation dinner for its Board of Directors and Faculty. A/Prof Chua shared his vision for SMA CMEP to be a learning platform assisting doctors in their quest to continually develop themselves in the multiple roles that the medical practice in Singapore requires. He also highlighted the need for a renewed focus on three core attributes of the profession: Love, Serve and Humility. In line with SMA’s vision, ‘For Doctors, For Patients’, SMA CMEP strives to build a strong doctor-patient relationship through serving the interests of patients before their own; nurturing doctors to be competent, collegial and professional through loving others more than themselves; and remembering always the humility of wisdom.

The SMA Council would like to take this opportunity to express our sincere gratitude to Dr T Thirumoorthy for his leadership and dedicated years in SMA CMEP, as well as to the SMA CMEP Core Faculty for their continuous support throughout the years, and for contributing their time and effort to our events.

Medical Ethics, Professionalism and Health Law Course

This is a two-and-a-half day mandatory course for doctors who, at the end of their specialist training, are embarking on the next stage of their professional growth to become consultants. The purpose of the course is to prepare them to lead clinical teams with independent medical and ethical decision-making; and to assume leadership in professional and clinical governance, as well as medical education. Since the course commenced in 2004, we have completed 42 runs and trained 2,637 individuals (as of December 2016).

Introductory Course in Health Law

In 2016, SMA CMEP launched a new series of seminars that covered the basic concepts of health law. This topic is relevant for all practising doctors and of greater value to medical leaders and teachers, especially those without prior education in this area. The first series of seminars this year was held in collaboration with JurongHealth.

Core Concepts in Medical Professionalism

Medicine belongs to the society and is held in trust by healthcare professionals, through medical professionalism – in which doctors and healthcare professionals are its promoters and custodians. Therefore, the leaders of the healthcare profession have a primary responsibility to promote and preserve medical professionalism; this educational course helps them to fulfil this responsibility. The Core Concepts in Medical Professionalism programme covers the following topics: Professionalism, Collegiality, the Doctor-Patient Relationship, Ethical Case Analysis, Professional Accountability and Governance, Consent, Conflict of Interest, Confidentiality and Privacy, and Evaluating Professionalism.

SMA CMEP ACTIVITIES IN 2016

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event name</th>
<th>No. of attendees</th>
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<tr>
<td>7 – 9 Jan</td>
<td>Medical Ethics, Professionalism and Health Law Course</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>For AST &amp; FM Trainees</td>
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<td>Medical Ethics, Professionalism and Health Law Course</td>
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<td>19 Mar &amp; 9 Apr</td>
<td>Medical Expert Witness Training</td>
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<td>In collaboration with AMS, SAL, LSS and State Courts</td>
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<td>26 – 28 May</td>
<td>Medical Ethics, Professionalism and Health Law Course</td>
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<td>Introductory Course in Health Law</td>
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<td>1 Oct</td>
<td>Core Concepts in Medical Professionalism</td>
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<td>6 – 8 Oct</td>
<td>Medical Ethics, Professionalism and Health Law Course</td>
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<td>For AST &amp; FM Trainees</td>
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<tr>
<td>22 – 23 Oct</td>
<td>The Annual National Medico-Legal Seminar 2016</td>
<td>130 (Day 1) 104 (Day 2)</td>
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SMA CMEP ACTIVITIES IN 2016

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<td>Basic Cardiac Life Support</td>
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<td>Clinic Assistant Train and Place Programme</td>
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<td>CPR + AED</td>
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<td>MPS: Achieving a Safer and Reliable Practice</td>
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<td>MPS: Mastering Adverse Outcomes</td>
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<td>SCS-SMA Cancer Education Series 2016</td>
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<td>SMA Seminar: Going into Private Practice</td>
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<tr>
<td>SMA Seminar: Tax Obligations on Medical Practice</td>
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<td>SMA Seminar: Workplace Safety and Health for Medical Practice Owners</td>
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SMA CMEP CORE FACULTY

Ms Rebecca Chew
Mr Christopher Chong
Dr Habeebul Rahman
Dr Harri Rizal Abdullah
Mr Edmund Krahenbuhl
Ms Khoo Boon Theng
Prof Kumaralingam Amirthalingam
Dr Daniel Kwek
Prof Gilbert Lau
Dr Angel Lee
A/Prof Lee See Muah
Mr Lok Siang Peng
Dr Peter Luke
Ms Mai Wei Munn
Dr Albert Myint Soe
Dr Seow Wee Tew
Prof Vishalkumar G Shelat
Dr Leslie Tay
A/Prof Cuthbert Teo
Mr Tham Hsu Hsien
Mr Eric Tin
Dr Luke Toh
Mr Edwin Tong
A/Prof Jason Yap

knowledge and skill sets ranging from monitoring vital signs and performing electrocardiography, to collecting and despatching biological specimens. At the end of the four-day course, course graduates had the opportunity to meet potential employers for a face-to-face recruitment interview.

SMA Lecture 2016

Last year’s SMA Lecture was delivered by Prof Sir Sabaratnam Arulkumaran, Professor Emeritus of Obstetrics and Gynaecology at St George’s, University of London. The lecture, entitled ‘Health and Human Rights’, saw a turnout of close to 200 doctors and healthcare professionals. In his lecture, Prof Arul introduced the established principles of human rights in health and how they can be applied. It was a thought-provoking lecture that encouraged clinicians to become keen advocates for health and human rights to benefit their patients, regardless of their backgrounds and differences.

OTHER SMA ACTIVITIES IN 2016

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<td>CPR: cardiopulmonary resuscitation</td>
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<td>ITE: Institute of Technical Education</td>
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<td>MPS: Medical Protection Society</td>
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<td>SCS: Singapore Cancer Society</td>
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SINGAPORE MEDICAL JOURNAL

Lifelong learning is an integral part of a medical doctor’s professional development. Since 1960, Singapore Medical Journal (SMJ) has provided doctors with free access to research papers, insightful commentaries and reviews on a wide variety of topics, including clinical practice guidelines and medicolegal issues, as well as continuing medical education (CME) articles for self-learning. SMJ has remained open access, as we recognise that broad access to research results and up-to-date medical information is an essential component of lifelong learning.

Highlights of 2016

SMJ is committed to publishing high-quality papers that add to the knowledge of physicians in Singapore and around the region. In 2016, 446 manuscripts were received from 27 countries, with Singapore papers making up the bulk of the submitted manuscripts, followed by submissions from ASEAN, the Middle East and East Asia. The manuscript acceptance rate remained at around 40%.

SMJ publishes papers that cover all aspects of human health: commissioned reviews, commentaries and editorials, original research, CME articles, short communications in the form of letters to the editor, and a small number of case reports. Last year, a total of 144 articles were published, with original research papers comprising more than half of the published articles. Our monthly Singapore Medical Council Category 3B CME programme continued to be popular among local practising doctors, with a total of 12,167 submissions received for the 24 CME articles published.

The SMJ website was upgraded in July 2016 to enhance mobile responsiveness, search functions and web navigation. This move was aimed at encouraging more readers to access the journal electronically, in keeping with the global call to reduce paper wastage. To improve our publication turnaround time, articles accepted in 2016 were e-published ahead of print within five months of acceptance. This important step has allowed research to be released earlier, especially since articles that are published ahead of print are simultaneously indexed in PubMed.

Moving forward, we hope to publish more invited reviews that offer comprehensive narrative analysis of recent or evolving developments in medicine. Some interesting original papers from overseas may be accompanied by insightful editorials that give a local perspective on the topic. In 2017, we will continue to improve our processes to encourage authors and readers to make SMJ their journal of choice.

SUBMISSIONS BY REGION IN 2016

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PUBLISHED ARTICLES IN 2016

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<td>Pictorial Essay</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>SMA Lecture</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Case Series</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>CPG (MOH)</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Book Review</td>
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<td>Medicine in Stamps</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Editorial</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Commentary</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Review Article</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Medical Education</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>PILL Series</td>
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<tr>
<td>Letter to the Editor</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Original Article</td>
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</tbody>
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SMA NEWS

SMA News is a newsletter for doctors, by doctors. We encourage a spirit of discussion and exchange of ideas, in the hope that this will spark a movement for change and improvement in the management of patients and the practice of medicine in Singapore.

Highlights of 2016

2016 was undoubtedly an eventful year for the medical profession, with changes in the local indemnity environment and questions concerning the healthcare business landscape being at the forefront. SMA News covered these pressing issues extensively during the year.

To help doctors navigate the medical indemnity maze, we featured articles from experts in the field in the March and July editions, clarifying the misconceptions surrounding medical indemnity. In the May issue, we published the results of the Managed Care Survey 2015, a survey jointly conducted by SMA and the College of Family Physicians Singapore, while the August issue, Managed Care: The Good, the Bad and the Ugly, hosted balanced discussions on the topic.

Other interesting topics covered in the year included recognising drug abuse among patients, protecting children from sexual abuse, doctors’ health, finding happiness and fulfilment, research and publication pressures, and honouring medical mentors, among others. The July Doctors in Training issue focused on Singapore’s newest medical school, the Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine, while the November issue showcased the work of our emergency medicine colleagues.

Through our monthly columns, SMA News aspire to ignite a positive change in the practice of medicine and management of patients. To this end, the Feature column, the mainstay of each edition, aims to explore important issues in healthcare. Meanwhile, personal opinions and analyses of medical issues are discussed in the Opinion and Insight columns, respectively. In the Interview column, we feature prominent personalities who inspire with their stories.

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### Key Financial Highlights

#### Group Statement of Income and Expenditure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Income</strong></td>
<td>$3,437,034</td>
<td>$3,240,561</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Expenditure</strong></td>
<td>$2,892,903</td>
<td>$2,946,847</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Surplus for the Year After Tax</strong></td>
<td>$544,131</td>
<td>$293,714</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Income**

- Commissions: $1,224,834 (2016), $1,139,300 (2015)


**Expenditure**

- Staff and Related Expenses: $1,634,831 (2016), $1,600,073 (2015)


#### Group Statement of Financial Position

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Assets</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-current assets</td>
<td>$6,708</td>
<td>$2,630</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current assets</td>
<td>$8,015,403</td>
<td>$7,412,791</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Assets</strong></td>
<td>$8,022,111</td>
<td>$7,415,421</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Equities and Liabilities**

- Non-current liabilities: $0 (2016), $0 (2015)

**Total Equity and Liabilities**: $8,022,111 (2016), $7,415,421 (2015)