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TAKING *SMA NEWS* TO EVEN GREATER HEIGHTS

By Dr Tan Yia Swam, Editor



IT IS a great honour to be appointed the Editor of *SMA News*. I want to thank my immediate predecessor, Dr Toh Han Chong, for his ten years of leadership. I hope to be able to carry on his good work and take this publication to even greater heights.

I joined the Ed Board as Deputy Editor in May 2008, and have learnt a lot in the past six years. We have a wonderfully talented and quirky team, each bringing a unique perspective to various topics, including healthcare, patient matters, medico-legal advice, or lifestyle.

One very important lesson that has held true again and again is: *SMA News* is for doctors, by doctors. We should not serve as anyone's mouthpiece, no matter whether they are the Government, any hospital, healthcare group or professional body. It is embedded in our culture to avoid controversial or contentious topics – yet, if this newsletter for doctors is not the place to do so, then where? I want to encourage a spirit of free discussion and exchange of ideas, and hopefully be able to spark a movement for change and improvement in the way we look after patients, and how we look after ourselves.

It is a very exciting time for change in Medicine. We are ever more aware of the stresses on the healthcare system – which have always been present, but now even more apparent – through the increased usage of social media among the public as well as junior doctors. The ageing population, the hospital bed crunch, the relative shortage of doctors in public sector versus the saturation of private practice, the influx of foreign doctors to supplement service and training needs, the increasing demands and expectations of patients, medical students and trainees... the list goes on.

My vision for *SMA News* is for it to truly be the Voice of the Profession. SMA has a close working relationship with the Ministry of Health, thanks to the support of Health Minister Mr Gan Kim Yong and Permanent Secretary Mrs Tan Ching Yee, as well as Director of Medical Services A/Prof Benjamin Ong. The SMA Council has a good spread of doctors from the private and public sectors, Family Medicine and various specialties, young and senior. However, we cannot be 100% representative of all doctors, unless we have your input. I want key issues of the day to be known to the medical profession, and I want to hear what you think. We can only provide some form of solutions for these problems when all of us discuss them constructively and work together for the future of Medicine. Simply complaining about them is not going to be of any use.

In this issue, we report the SMA Annual Dinner and Singapore's hosting of the MASEAN Conference. We also carry articles on professionalism and retirement, as well as a charity mission spearheaded by my classmate and fellow Ed Board member Dr Jayant V Iyer.

In the upcoming months, I will work with key members of my team to revamp and update *SMA News*, so that we will continue to remain relevant for today's doctors. We look forward to your continued support, both as readers and writers, and welcome all feedback at news@sma.org.sg. Thank you, and hope you had a great June "holiday"! ■

Dr Tan Yia Swam is currently still a registrar at Tan Tock Seng Hospital, busy juggling work, family and friends.