

News from SMA Council

By Dr Tham Tat Yean, Honorary Secretary

A brief report on SMA's initiatives is given below. The SMA Council continues to monitor the situation in Australia and to make representations, on behalf of UMP Members in Singapore. Further developments will be posted to UMP Members by mail and will also be updated on the SMA website <http://www.sma.org.sg> ■

25 April 2002	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ After receiving news of the UMP crisis, SMA sought clarification with the UMP Sydney office, and was informed that more information would be available after the UMP Board's meeting on 29 April.
29 April 2002	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Upon receipt of the announcement of the UMP Board's decision to instruct their lawyers to make application to the Court to appoint a Provisional Liquidator, SMA sought clarification of the implication of this decision on professional indemnity coverage for UMP Members in Singapore.
1 May 2002	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ An article "Aussie health services in crisis as insurer goes bust" appeared in the Straits Times.
2 May 2002	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ At an Extraordinary Meeting of the SMA Council, it was decided: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To issue a Statement the next day to officially notify members of the UMP going into provisional liquidation and to provide pertinent information adapted from the Q&A from Australia. • Dr Wong Chiang Yin, 2nd Vice President of SMA, to meet with Mr Allan Hunter, General Manager, Claims Services, UMP, and the Provisional Liquidator in Sydney. • To seek written confirmation from the Provisional Liquidator that the Guarantee by the Australian Government was applicable to UMP Members in Singapore. If not, to request the Provisional Liquidator to arrange for "tail" cover for UMP Members in Singapore. • Dr Lee Pheng Soon and A/Prof Goh Lee Gan to discuss with MPS and NTUC Income respectively.
3 May 2002	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ SMA President, three Exco Members and an MOH Representative met with Mr Gary Quinlan, the Australian High Commissioner in Singapore to register our concerns on the UMP development and to seek his assistance in the matter. ✦ SMA received news of the appointment of the UMP Provisional Liquidator, Mr David Lombe, a partner of Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu. ✦ SMA issued the first Statement and FAQ to address concerns of UMP Members in Singapore.
8 May 2002	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ SMA forwarded the Provisional Liquidator's Statement to UMP Members.
10 May 2002	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Dr Wong Chiang Yin met with the UMP Management and the Provisional Liquidator in Sydney.
15 May 2002	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ The SMA Council received a report of Dr Wong's meeting in Sydney, that the Federal Guarantee for UMP members in Australia is not applicable to UMP Members in Singapore. ✦ SMA received updates of discussions with MPS and NTUC Income. ✦ The SMA Council also considered offers from other providers (local and Australian). ✦ MOH reiterated the need for a multi-player market for medical indemnity and reinforced its support for SMA to talk to more than one party so that Members can have a choice.
21 May 2002	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ The second SMA Statement to update UMP Members on SMA's communication with UMP Sydney, as well as SMA's initiatives to assist UMP Members with retrospective "tail" cover, was issued. ✦ The SMA Council wrote to the Provisional Liquidator to request (1) for the return of subscriptions contributed by Singapore UMP Members, for the purchase of "tail" cover in Singapore, or (2) for provision of "tail" cover for Singapore UMP Members.
24 May 2002	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ SMA circulated NTUC Income's preliminary announcement of its scheme of insurance cover for Singapore doctors.
30 May 2002	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Receipt of reply from the Provisional Liquidator informing that the Guarantee of cover by the Australian Federal Government was only made to Australian doctors, and that he is unable to assist with "tail" cover for Singapore UMP Members. ✦ The SMA Council met to receive progress reports on discussions with MPS and NTUC Income, both of whom gave indications that offers would be ready soon.
3 June 2002	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ SMA issued its fourth Statement to update UMP Members on its communication with the Provisional Liquidator, and explanatory notes on medical indemnity matters. ✦ Circulated the MPS offer of "nose" cover.
13 June 2002	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ SMA circulated the MPS circular and NTUC Income's offer of medical indemnity scheme.
20 June 2002	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ SMA circulated MPS "nose" cover applications.
24 June 2002	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ After confirmation with UMP legal advisers in Singapore, SMA informed Members that the Provisional Liquidator is still processing cases which occurred during the period of Singapore Members' UMP membership. However, claims settlement would be pending the outcome of the Provisional Liquidator's report. Members who require assistance may submit their claims to UMP directly or through their panel lawyers in Singapore.

Note: "UMP" or "United" = "United Medical Protection"