

# President's Forum

by Adj Asst Prof Tan Tze Lee, President, 26<sup>th</sup> Council, College of Family Physicians Singapore

It has been 46 years since the College was established in 1971. We held the 46<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting on 29<sup>th</sup> July 2017 at the College of Medicine Building, and it was very well attended. Many thanks for all those who took time from their busy schedule to attend the AGM!

Our heartfelt thanks to our retiring members of Council, namely our immediate past president A/Prof Lee Kheng Hock, A/P Tan Boon Yeow, Dr Doraisamy Gowri, Dr Alvin Ong, Dr Valerie Teo and Dr Jonathan Pang. A special word of thanks must go to A/Prof Lee Kheng Hock, who has served selflessly for over two decades on the council and as President for the last six.

We would also like to give a warm welcome to our six new Council members who have joined us for this new term. They are Dr Darren Seah, Dr David Tan, Dr Xu Bang Yu, Dr Lim Ang Tee, Dr Wong Tien Hua and Dr Agnes Koong. The names of the new Council can be seen on Page 2. This new team brings together family physicians from diverse backgrounds and experiences, bringing their skills and networks to continue to effect the transformation of Family Medicine.

Family Medicine is now entering a new phase of the development as we work towards better integration and networking. It started in the last decade, much has been said about this, and much time and resources have been invested to achieve these goals. We are hopeful that, with good engagement and consultation, good quality cost effective solutions can be found and implemented. General Practitioners (GPs) and Family Physicians (FPs) working in the community understand the ground situation best, and their contribution to finding a workable solution cannot be downplayed.

Our fraternity has had many challenges over the years. One of the issues the past few months has been that of the third party administrators (TPAs). With the new ethical guidelines from the Singapore Medical Council, many doctors who provide care through these TPAs found themselves in an ethical dilemma. The three professional bodies, the Singapore Medical Association (SMA), the Academy of Medicine Singapore (AMS) and the College sought to



Adj Asst Prof Tan Tze Lee (standing) gives his heartfelt thanks to the audience, retiring council members and the immediate past president at the AGM on 29 July 2017. With him are (from left) A/Prof Lim Fong Seng, Dr Paul Goh, Dr S Suraj Kumar and A/Prof Lee Kheng Hock.

provide some guidance through a couple of joint advisories to our members. These advisories we hoped would help our members to make their own decisions on how they could engage with the TPAs.

In September, the College will be holding the 6<sup>th</sup> Asia Pacific Primary Care Research Conference, and this will be the third time the College has organised the event. This year, we are co-organising the conference with the SingHealth Duke-NUS Family Medicine Academic Clinical Programme (FM ACP). We have a fruitful programme over three days, and there is a Family Medicine symposium held on the Saturday afternoon. The symposium covering many topics including TCM, Sports Medicine, Paediatrics and Geriatrics. This is an excellent opportunity for GPs, FPs and budding researchers to meet, network and enhance their research skills!

Although our health care system is often the envy of the world because its cost-effective hybrid system, it has also been called “fragmented” and “disintegrated” in how care is delivered. The focus now to build up primary care to address the needs of the nation is timely. We need to remember that family medicine revolves around the family, the patient’s family, the wider communal family, and even the family of health care providers. In the words of a dear colleague Dr Elaine Tan of MOH: “As a family physician, I am glad that the promise of primary care is being recognised. Family doctors play a unique role in empowering, caring for and journeying with patients through life, and there is power of the doctor-patient relationship and trust that underpins this, for better patient outcomes.”

I couldn’t agree more.

■ CM