

# Report on Fee Benchmarks Advisory Committee

by Dr Lim Hui Ling, MCFP(S), Honorary Assistant Secretary, 26<sup>th</sup> Council, College of Family Physicians Singapore

The Ministry of Health appointed a Fee Benchmarks Advisory Committee in January 2018 to recommend appropriate guidelines on fees for medical procedures and services. This was done with the triple aim of helping doctors set appropriate and reasonable fees, patients and employers make better decisions on medical care options and insurance companies improve policy design and claim assessments as well as determine provider panels.

The committee is being chaired by Dr Lim Yean Teng, a senior cardiologist in private practice, who had also served for 24 years in the public sector, inclusive of being Chairman of Medical Board at the National University Hospital. It comprises members from diverse backgrounds and practice, including doctors from both the private and public sectors, as well as representatives from private hospitals, the insurance industry and patient advocates (please see side bar).

CFPS welcomes the initiative by MOH to set up the Fee Benchmarks Advisory Committee and we are supporting it with representation on the Committee. Since the SMA Guidelines on Fees was withdrawn in 2007 in lieu of fair competition provisions, many of our colleagues in private practice have had difficulty deciding appropriate fees to charge, especially for less

common procedures and services. It has also been difficult to advise our patients about their options when we need to refer them on for secondary care.

The benchmarks are not meant to be restrictive and doctors can charge outside of these guidelines as long as they can justify them with good reason, giving due consideration to practice settings, complexity of cases, individual patient requirements and other variables. They are certainly not meant to unreasonably suppress fees. In fact, for Family Practice, MOH is more concerned that unsustainably low fees may make it difficult for GPs to provide the high quality primary healthcare needed by our population.

This fee benchmarking exercise will be a massive undertaking as we will be presented with very detailed data to analyse for each procedure, and will be taking into account many view points in setting the fees. The committee will publish its recommendations in phases starting with fee benchmarks for common surgical procedures in the second half of 2018. Benchmarks for consultation fees and other procedures more relevant to primary care will only be available later as data is not so easily available. CFPS will soon need to engage our members in practice with a survey on fees and we hope you will respond enthusiastically.

## FEE BENCHMARKS ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

### CHAIRMAN

#### Dr Lim Yean Teng

Dr Lim Yean Teng is currently a Senior Consultant Cardiologist in private practice. He had previously served in the public sector for 24 years, including as Chairman of the Medical Board and the Head of Cardiac Department at the National University Hospital. Dr Lim has also served on various national committees, including as Chairman of the National Committee for Cardiac Care, and Chairman for the Specialists' Training Committee for Cardiology at the Ministry of Health (MOH).

### MEMBERS

#### Dr Ang Chong Lye

Dr Ang Chong Lye is a Senior Consultant Ophthalmologist at the Singapore National Eye Centre. He was formerly the Chief Executive Officer of the Singapore General Hospital and Deputy Group Chief Executive Officer of Singapore Health Services (Clinical Services & Informatics). Prior to that, Dr Ang was the former Medical Director of Singapore National Eye Centre.

#### Mr Benedict Cheong

Mr Benedict Cheong is the Chief Executive of Temasek Foundation International. Prior to this, he was the Chief Executive Officer of the National Council of Social Service. Mr Cheong is currently also serving as Chairman of the Medifund Advisory Council.

#### Dr Ho Kok Sun

A Council Member of the Academy of Medicine Singapore (AMS), Dr Ho Kok Sun represents the AMS on the Fee Benchmarks Advisory Committee. He is a Consultant Colorectal Surgeon, currently in private practice and formerly at the Singapore General Hospital. Dr Ho is also the immediate past President of the College of Surgeons Singapore.

#### Mr Karthikeyan Krishnamurthy

Mr Karthikeyan Krishnamurthy is the Vice President of National Trade Union Congress (NTUC) Central Committee. He is also the Vice President of the Consumer Association of Singapore (CASE) Central Committee. He had previously served as a Nominated Member of Parliament.

#### Dr Lam Kian Ming

Dr Lam Kian Ming is the Chief Executive Officer of Mount Alvernia Hospital. Prior to this, he was the Chief Executive Officer of Thomson Medical Group (Singapore) and Group Director at the Health Sciences Authority.

#### Dr Lim Hui Ling

Currently the Honorary Assistant Secretary for the College of Family Physicians Singapore (CFPS), Dr Lim Hui Ling represents the CFPS on the Fee Benchmarks Advisory Committee. Dr Lim is a Senior Family Physician in private practice.

#### Ms Ngiam Siew Ying

Ms Ngiam Siew Ying is the Deputy Secretary (Policy) at the Ministry of Health.

#### Dr Phua Kai Hong

Dr Phua Kai Hong is Faculty Member of Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy. A health economist, Dr Phua has served on various boards of healthcare organisations and national health policy and advisory committees. His advice is frequently sought by governments and international organisations.

#### Dr Tan Boon Yeow

Dr Tan Boon Yeow is currently the Chief Executive Officer of St Luke's Hospital. He is also the Vice Chairman of the Chapter of Family Medicine, Academy of Medicine and an Adjunct Associate Professor at the Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine, National University of Singapore (NUS) and Duke-NUS Medical School.

#### Dr Toh Choon Lai

Currently a Council Member of the Singapore Medical Association (SMA), Dr Toh Choon Lai represents the SMA on the Fee Benchmarks Advisory Committee. Dr Toh was formerly the first Vice President of the SMA and the editor of the last edition of the SMA Guidelines on Fees. Dr Toh is a senior Orthopaedic Surgeon in private practice. He was previously the Deputy Head of the Department of Orthopaedic Surgery at Tan Tock Seng Hospital.

#### Mr Richard Wyber

Currently the Chairperson of the Health Insurance Task Force Working Group of the Life Insurance Association Singapore (LIA), Mr Richard Wyber represents the LIA on the Fee Benchmarks Advisory Committee. Mr Wyber is the Head of Healthcare & Vitality Marketing of AIA Singapore.

#### Mr Zainul Abidin Rasheed

Mr Zainul Abidin Rasheed is a Non-Resident Ambassador for Kuwait and the Foreign Minister's Special Envoy for the Middle East. Mr Zainul was formerly the Senior Minister of State (Foreign Affairs), Mayor of the North East Community Development Council, and a Member of Parliament. He has also served on various boards and committees of both private and non-profit organisations.

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([https://www.moh.gov.sg/content/moh\\_web/home/pressRoom/pressRoomItemRelease/2018/moh-appoints.html](https://www.moh.gov.sg/content/moh_web/home/pressRoom/pressRoomItemRelease/2018/moh-appoints.html))