



COLLEGE OF FAMILY PHYSICIANS
SINGAPORE

THE College Mirror

VOL. 48 NO. 2 JUN 2022

Achieving *Better* Health Outcomes

Prof Tan Chorh Chuan, Chief Health Scientist, Ministry of Health, was the Guest-of-Honour at the World Family Doctor Day Dinner on 14th May 2022. In his speech, Prof Tan reflected on some major new opportunities for primary care to create an even greater impact in the years ahead.



Prof Tan Chorh Chuan at the World Family Doctor Day Dinner 2022

IN THIS ISSUE

8
FULFILLING THE PROMISE
OF DIGITAL HEALTH IN
THE UKRAINIAN REFUGEES
RESPONSE

10
HEALTHIER SG

16
GP ATTACHMENT EXPERIENCE
DURING PEAK OF COVID19

17
INTRODUCTION TO GP CLINIC
PRECEPTORSHIP PROGRAMME

18
ETHICS IN AESTHETICS

Adjunct Associate Professor Tan Tze Lee, President, College of Family Physicians Singapore, Mr Ng How Yue, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Health, Family Medicine colleagues and friends, good evening.

It is really such a great pleasure to be able to meet so many colleagues and old friends in person after all this time, and to join you to mark World Family Doctor Day this evening. As family doctors and leaders in primary care, you play a vital role in our healthcare system. Tonight we celebrate your good work, and mark your many achievements and contributions. Through your individual and collective leadership, primary care in Singapore has made enormous strides in continually raising the quality of care and health outcomes.

This evening, I would like to reflect on some major new opportunities for primary care to create an even greater impact in the years ahead.

LESSONS FROM TWO PANDEMICS

As we all know, Singapore has a world-class healthcare system. All of us who

contribute to it feel very proud of this, and our residents achieve excellent health outcomes.

Despite this, as our population ages and healthcare demands grow in volume and complexity, we have to ask ourselves a crucial question: how will we maintain or achieve even better health outcomes at affordable costs in the future?

I would like to start with the main learning points from two ongoing pandemics. The first pandemic is the fast one we are all too familiar with - COVID-19. The second is a slow pandemic, which actually causes several-fold more deaths around the world every year, most of them prematurely. This is the familiar pandemic of chronic diseases. It is a major challenge for Singapore, compounded by our rapidly ageing population.¹

These two pandemics are very different. But they highlight four common factors that are critical to transforming health, and which must therefore be adequately addressed.

- First, a focus on **prevention** and early concerted action;

(continued on the next page)

CONTENTS

01 Cover Story

ACHIEVING BETTER HEALTH OUTCOMES

04 Editor's Words

06 Event

WORLD FAMILY DOCTOR DAY
- PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

08 Report

FULFILLING THE PROMISING OF DIGITAL
HEALTH IN THE UKRAINIAN REFUGEES
RESPONSE

10 Report

- ACTIVATING OUR NETWORK OF FAMILY
PHYSICIANS
- COMPLETE THE CARE PLAN WITH SOCIAL
PRESCRIBINGS
- COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP TO SUPPORT
BETTER HEALTH
- NATIONAL HEALTHIER SG ENROLMENT
PROGRAM
- TRAINING FOR HEALTHIER SG

16 Doc in Practice

- GP ATTACHMENT EXPERIENCE DURING
PEAK OF COVID19
- INTRODUCTION TO GP CLINIC
PRECEPTORSHIP PROGRAMME

18 Doc in Practice

ETHICS IN AESTHETICS

22 FPSC #104

MENTAL CAPACITY ACT

24 FPSC #102

PERSONS WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY

Published by
College of Family Physicians Singapore
Registration Number: S71SS0039J
Registration Period: 7 August 2021 to 6 August 2023
College of Medicine Building
16 College Road #01-02, Singapore 169854
Tel: (65) 6223 0606 Fax: (65) 6222 0204
GST Registration Number: M90367025C
E-mail: information@cfps.org.sg
MCI (P) 068/10/2021

Articles represent the authors' opinions & not the views of CFPS unless specified.
Not to be reproduced without editor's permission.

(continued from Page 1: World Family Doctor Day Guest of Honour's Speech)

- Second, the crucial role of **behaviour** at the level of individuals and communities;
- Third, **data** that can be safely shared and used across settings, and to track and improve outcomes; and
- Fourth, ensuring the health ecosystem is **well integrated**.

These are powerful insights but what then, should we do differently? What are the pivotal changes that if implemented well, would ensure our health system will remain future-ready?

The pivotal changes needed are captured in the three key pillars of the strategy for Healthier SG, which was recently announced by Minister for Health, Mr Ong Ye Kung, and which represents the national health transformation agenda. The three pillars are:

- a. Transforming primary care;
- b. Integrating the health ecosystem, and aligning incentives towards preventive health and care; and
- c. Enabling residents and patients to actively manage their own health.

These three strategies are clearly intertwined. I would like to speak briefly first about the nature of the challenges, before outlining how Healthier SG would seek to address them comprehensively.

The current challenges in primary care are well known to this expert audience. In fact, we get most of our insights from you. General Practitioners (GPs) provide 80% of primary care, but manage only 60% of chronic disease attendances. By and large, preventive health is not a prominent part of most GPs' work. 85% of GP clinics are single or small group practices and they will find it increasingly hard to provide the holistic, team-based care that more and more of our patients require. The majority of residents do not have a regular family doctor, even though local studies² show that patients enrolled to a regular care team tend to achieve better results and outcomes with fewer hospital visits and admissions. On the plus side, through the Primary Care Network (PCN) scheme, GPs can access better support to provide team-based care. Extensions to the Community Health Assist Scheme and Chronic Disease Management Programme have improved the financing and patient payment issues. But as we all know, substantial challenges persist.

In general, GPs are also not well integrated into the wider health ecosystem. Data flows and linkages between GPs and healthcare clusters vary, and are often not strong. Similarly, GPs are often not well connected to community resources and services, which would be essential for a strengthened focus on prevention and patient empowerment. The ability of our family doctors to empower their patients to better self-manage their conditions is therefore constrained.

(continued on Page 5)

(continued from Page 3: World Family Doctor Day Guest of Honour's Speech)

HEALTHIER SG

With Healthier SG, we hope to work together with all of you and other stakeholders, towards a transformed primary care that will have several important new features which will make it future-ready:

- a. **Progressive enrolment of residents to family doctors** will be a crucial move, it will help us to move towards the long-term goal that each resident will have a regular family doctor, who provides trusted and holistic care, which will underpin the main thrust of Healthier SG.
- b. At the same time, we have to make sure that **GPs receive greater support so that they can be the key drivers of Healthier SG**. This means that GPs would be better able to help their patients keep healthy, prevent the onset of disease, as well as the progression of chronic diseases to severe medical complications. To do this, peer professional support has to be greatly enhanced. This can be achieved by GPs being members of PCNs, and through strong connections with a cluster. Many of you are helping us with care protocols, and these care protocols are being developed for common conditions, with specific support being thought about and developed, in terms of counselling, subsidised drugs and services, which will be put in place to facilitate their implementation by GPs. Changes will also be made to funding so that the GPs' work in Healthier SG will be sufficiently attractive, and anchor a new business model for GPs, which are centred on preventive health and holistic care. We will also look into the differences in payments that patients have to make for common drugs between GPs and polyclinics, so that patients can continue to be managed affordably by their GPs even if their medication requirements increase.

In parallel with all these, **Healthier SG will also work to strengthen the integration of our health system.**

- a. **Central to this is good data and IT connectivity**, and we will work to progressively establish this between GPs, clusters, the Ministry of Health (MOH) and other agencies. This will greatly enable the data sharing, which is absolutely necessary for good and coordinated patient care, analysis of trends and gaps in patient coverage, and the timely use of data for monitoring and continual clinical quality improvement.
- b. In parallel with this, we will also work towards **more facilitated social prescribing by primary care teams**, and we will facilitate this by developing linkages between polyclinics and GPs, and relevant community services. The goal is to enable family doctors to readily activate community resources to support patients who require additional support to achieve preventive or curative health goals which involve sustained behaviour change.

Through Healthier SG, **we will also plan to develop approaches to empower patients to actively participate in the management of their own health and medical conditions.** This is absolutely crucial because we all know that no matter what we do on the provider's side, if we do not also enable and engage patients to actively participate in their own health, then we will not be able to achieve the most optimal outcomes. While initially, this empowerment will involve targeted patient education, prompts and nudges, as we bring on board progressive abilities for GPs to activate community services through social prescribing, this would also support patient empowerment. Then later on, when we introduce telehealth for common chronic diseases, this will substantially add to patient empowerment. The provision of the digital infrastructure for telehealth will also pave the way for the future deployment of new wearable and digital technologies that would provide a step-change enhancement in the ability of patients and their care teams to manage chronic conditions.

INVITATION TO JOIN

I hope that my speech today conveys some of my great personal excitement about Healthier SG. It is one of those key moments in time, when we all have the opportunity to contribute to a critical upward inflection in Singapore's primary care and health ecosystem.

MOH has set up a primary care Implementation Workgroup which includes representatives from the College of Family Physicians Singapore (CFPS), Singapore Medical Association, leads from all PCNs and our polyclinic clusters. The first meeting held at the end of April 2022, was very fruitful. In the coming months, we plan to engage and consult the wider primary care community so that we will have the benefit of your views and inputs.

I really hope that all of you will actively participate in these consultation sessions and the co-creation of Healthier SG. We have to be realistic. The journey will be a very challenging one and it will take multiple years. But, the reward will be very fulfilling – better and healthier outcomes for our patients, even greater professional satisfaction for primary care colleagues, and a health ecosystem which will be better poised for the future.

CLOSING

Ladies and gentlemen, my first deep engagement with CFPS and the primary care community was in the late 1990s, when I was Dean of the National University of Singapore Faculty of Medicine. At that time, I worked closely with the College on revamping primary care training for medical students and young doctors. But I want to highlight that it is very notable

(continued on the next page)

(continued from Page 5: World Family Doctor Day Guest of Honour's Speech)

that it was the College which came forward proactively to propose a range of very meaningful changes. And what struck me most was the passion and deep sense of professional commitment of the College and the primary care community.

This passion and proactive leadership have been a consistent hallmark – most recently demonstrated by the indispensable role which primary care colleagues played in our COVID-19 response. Your selfless devotion to our patients and our community was truly inspiring. Beyond COVID-19, the careful attention that the College has been paying to the training of future generations of primary care physicians has also been very commendable. On behalf of my colleagues in MOH, we wish to express our heartfelt thanks to all of you!

As we take steps to shape the future, all of us look forward very much to your support, wise counsel and help to design and implement the different elements of Healthier SG. Your active leadership and participation will be critical to its effective implementation and longer-term success.

As we mark World Family Doctor Day this evening, this is a fitting occasion to embark on a new journey – one that aspires to realise the full potential of a high performing primary care system, one that lays the foundation of a future ready primary care system and health ecosystem, but also one which is poised to ride on the new approaches, technologies and opportunities of the future, to produce the best possible outcomes for our patients and population.

Please join us on this most meaningful endeavour! Thank you.

1. Department of Statistics Singapore – <https://www.singstat.gov.sg/find-data/search-by-theme/population/elderly-youth-and-gender-profile/latest-data>
2. Based on preliminary evaluation of polyclinics team-based care model using data from NHGP and NUP where outcomes of patients who were empanelled to a team-based care as of 31 December 2017 to patients who were not empanelled over a 3-year period.

■ CM

World Family Doctor Day President's Address

Speech delivered by Adj A/Prof Tan Tze Lee, President, 28th Council, College of Family Physicians Singapore

Professor Tan Chorh Chuan, Chief Health Scientist, Ministry of Health and Executive Director, MOH Office of Healthcare Transformation, Past Presidents, Council, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen.

Thank you very much for joining us to celebrate WONCA's World Family Doctor Day. We are indeed very privileged to have with us tonight as our Guest-of-Honour Prof Tan Chorh Chuan. Prof Tan is the Chief Health Scientist of MOH and the executive director of MOHT, and is one of the principal architects of Singapore's healthcare transformation. We have heard much of the forthcoming Healthier SG initiatives, and we as the primary care community look forward to being consulted and working closely with MOH on this project.

"Family Doctors, Always There to Care" is WONCA's call for family doctors for 2022's World Family Doctor Day.

This is something that we can certainly all identify with. We are always there to serve our patients, a constant in their busy lives, who they can come to for their medical needs. We care for their various needs, whether it be medical, psychological or social, and help them resolve these issues as best as we can.



As their family doctors, we are indeed in a very privileged position, and such responsibility should not be taken lightly.

Our patients trust us, they need us to look after them, to protect them, to provide for their health needs.

As family doctors we are always present, providing continuity of care at all stages of our patients' lives, coordinating their care with other healthcare professionals, always striving to develop and improve skills and methodologies to take care of our patients.

Family doctors are there wherever and whenever we are needed, thus creating strong bonds and relationships with our patients.

Last but not least, we as family doctors deliver accessible equitable high quality and sustainable care for their patients. These are lofty goals but for many of us it is already what we do, and we will continue to strive to improve.

Every year, on World Family Doctor Day, we take the opportunity to commemorate the many achievements and contributions our family doctors have made to our