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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.

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 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.

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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

communities in Singapore. However, since the arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic upon our fair shores in 2020, we were not able to have a physical meeting for this event over the past 2 years. To be able to meet together in this ballroom tonight gives me great hope that we have begun to see the light at the end of this pandemic tunnel and that we will emerge much stronger for it!

The last 2 years have been very challenging for many of us in Family Medicine. For those of us in the frontlines, we had to screen patients for acute respiratory infections, swab them and also monitor their home recovery. Some of us in the community hospitals took care of C+ patients sent there for monitoring and recovery. Some of our polyclinic colleagues took care of cases in the dormitories. The list goes on. What is evident is that our Primary Care and Family Medicine fraternity is indeed a force to be reckoned with, who can be called upon in times of crisis, and be relied upon to deliver on the tasks on hand.

Much of this could only have been possible because of the close working relationship the Ministry of Health has with College and our GP and FP partners. The timely consultations and communications built up much trust and goodwill between the MOH and primary care providers on the ground. This hard won trust must not be squandered, and needs to be further nurtured and cultivated as we spearhead this new initiative, Healthier SG, which was announced by Minister Mr Ong Ye Kung in Parliament earlier this year. Healthier SG represents a quantum shift for our healthcare system, the focus now firmly and squarely on population health, and going forward much work needs to be done. The College is strongly committed to supporting Healthier SG, and many of our council members have in fact volunteered to represent our GPs and FPs in its various committees and sub-committees.

Our relationship with WONCA goes back all the way to its beginnings in the 1970s; the College has even hosted 2 WONCA world conferences in Singapore; in 1983 and again in 2007! This relationship has been very strong all these years, and we continue to play an active role in the Asia Pacific Region. Through the efforts of our past presidents like Dr Alfred Loh, Dr Lee Suan Yew, A/Prof Lim Lean Huat, A/Prof Goh Lee Gan, A/Prof Cheong Pak Yean and A/Prof Lee Kheng Hock, our college has indeed contributed much to WONCA APR, and as such the College continues to enjoy much goodwill in the organisation.

As you may well know the college was successful in our bid to host the WONCA APR meeting in 2023, and this has since been postponed to 2024 due to COVID. There is much work to be done and our talented team, led by Dr Xu Bang Yu and Dr Low Lian Leng, will be gathering their team from amongst you in the next few months!

On this island we call our home, our family doctors are found in all manner of settings. We are found in heartland clinics, town clinics, polyclinics, community hospitals, ILTCs, homecare, palliative care, the list goes on. The mark that distinguishes the family doctor is that he or she is truly dedicated to providing generalist medical care. Our mission is very simple: and that is to provide the best healthcare we can for our patients and their kampung. Very often, we know our patients over many years; with each encounter we add to that priceless doctor-patient relationship built up over many years.

To better equip our members to manage their patients, the College started training the first batch of GPs in 1971. Our courses have since evolved, and we now have courses in the Graduate Diploma of Family Medicine, the College Master of Medicine (FM) course, and the Fellowship course.

We have done well; our college training programmes have been very successful! However we cannot just rest on our laurels and rely on the same formula for the coming generations. As Singapore's demographics change, so our programmes have had to evolve to address future needs. We have identified the need for more in-depth training in medical ethics in family medicine, and we are working hard to introduce more such components into our programmes.

Our academic teams have worked tirelessly towards improving standards, making our courses and qualifications more relevant to our primary care community. Their energy and commitment is simply amazing, and for this we are truly thankful! It gives us much inspiration as everyone is working for the improvement of their wards... altruistically and selflessly... well done team!

Whether we work in the private or public sector, our aims for our healthcare system are one, to provide affordable, high quality healthcare for all. As the public private divide becomes increasingly blurred, it is my hope that Singapore's healthcare system will finally evolve to become truly integrated, whether you are primary, secondary or tertiary care, public or private. Providing care that is seamlessly integrated where all clinicians across the healthcare spectrum are able to work together for the benefit of our patients.

The goal of **One Family Doctor for Every Singaporean** is finally within reach! Let us make it a reality!

Thank you.

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