



COLLEGE OF FAMILY PHYSICIANS  
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# THE College Mirror

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## CFPS Commencement Ceremony 2022

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Fellow family physicians, Ladies and Gentlemen. Good afternoon.

Thank you for inviting me to be part of this year's commencement ceremony. It is heartening to see so many of us here in person to celebrate the start of the college's academic year. This year's ceremony is certainly special to many of us, given that we can gather in person, despite the recent rise in COVID-19 cases.

What is even more heartening is to know the number of Family Medicine trainees we have for this academic year. Year on year, we have been seen a growing interest in Family Medicine post graduate training, at both the College of Family Physicians training programmes and also for Family medicine residency training.

Family Medicine principles, that are based on the Ps and Cs are an integral part of our practice of medicine and is familiar to many of us in this room.

Our Family Physicians provide - Care that is Comprehensive, looking after everyone from cradle to grave, Continuing care that allows us to be part of our patient's care journey over

the years and to be their Coordinators of care. The Ps include, Personal care that is patient centric and Preventive care that goes beyond just the acute presenting problem.

I would like for us to think about one more P, Purpose.

Purpose is an essential element of who we are. It is the reason you wake up and look forward to the day ahead. Wherever you choose to practice, remember the reason why you chose Medicine and now family medicine. As each of you, start on the training programme, I would like to challenge you to think about the bigger purpose that primary care and our family physicians can play in our healthcare system.

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Many of you would have heard of Healthier SG. At the Committee of Supply debate earlier this year, Minister for Health, Mr Ong Ye Kung announced the plans for Healthier SG and a key thrust is the shift towards preventive care and also the need to anchor care with our Family Physicians.

Healthier SG aims to help every Singaporean to not just remain healthy but to be healthier. All of you as our FM trainees and future FM doctors and leaders have an important role to play as we shape the future of how healthcare in Singapore will be. Let me share with you an inspiring example. Healthier SG is being co-created with Singaporeans and our primary care doctors. Our very own FPs have stepped forward to actively give their time and energy to chair several important Healthier SG sub workgroups. For example under the leadership of Dr Eng Soo Kiang and Dr Jacqueline Yam, they led the care protocol sub workgroups to develop 12 care protocols that will be the foundation of the care that will be delivered as part of Healthier SG. A big insider tip to our trainees, once this is published, you should know these care recommendations inside out. It is likely to be even more topical and relevant to daily practice than even your GDFM module notes or senior notes.

But for Healthier SG to succeed, we do require a mindset shift among our residents, our healthcare providers. Healthier SG will be a multi-year system transformation effort, that will place primary care very firmly at the centre of our healthcare system.

Barack Obama once said, Change is the effort of committed citizens who hitch their wagons to something bigger than themselves and work for it every single day. Change requires more than just speaking out, it requires listening, as well. It is only when you hitch your wagon to something larger than yourself, that you realize your full potential.

Education is indeed a powerful tool for change. The opportunity to learn from the many great teachers that college has. The friendship that you will form as you attend tutorials together. Even if the tutorials are on zoom, I'm sure many of you will agree that virtual bonds can still be formed. If anything, it will be based on the shared experience of poor wifi and embarrassing backgrounds.

Education is a powerful tool, because once you start on this journey and actively seek to learn, not just for the sake of a certificate, you'll soon realize how much more there is to learn. Or rather, how little you really know. Family Medicine covers the breadth of medicine and going through a structured programme helps to consolidate knowledge and is a valuable toolkit to have as we aim to provide better care for our patients.

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Our family physicians will be entrusted with providing care to the residents that choose to enroll with us. As their trusted provider, we need to provide care that is evidence based, is affordable and built on a shared understanding of their health goals. It is indeed heartening to note that many of you present here today, do not stop with just the GDFM but will go on to obtain your Masters of Medicine in Family Medicine and also your fellowship.

As someone who was once a trainee, although many years ago, I would like to reassure our new trainees, that while the road ahead may seem long and the thought of more studying seems daunting, it is the people that you meet along the way that will encourage you to take one step forward, and another step, and another step! The confidence that comes from knowing that you are providing great care for your patients, will keep you going. Patients truly are at the heart of healthcare, and personally, it is the small moments of listening to their stories and sharing heartfelt conversations that have shaped and defined my family medicine experience and reminds me of why we are doctors and why we are here on our journey of learning.

Wishing our trainees all the best on your journey of learning. Thank you.

■ CM