

# President's *Forum*

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**2** 022; what a Roller Coaster of a Year!

Having emerged from COVID restrictions, the relaxation of social distancing and testing requirements has been very much welcome. It is so refreshing to be out and about in public places without the need to wear a mask. Large social gatherings like dinner and wedding banquets, conferences and conventions, clinical training activities are back on track. Our calendars, social and otherwise, have never been so full!

Formula 1 came back to town after a hiatus of 2 years, and it was reported to be the best attended F1 in its history. It was rather surreal to see so many visitors, majority maskless, descend onto the Marina Bay area. The anticipated COVID wave was thankfully short-lived. By early November, the surge had stabilised; COVID-19 case numbers had come down to below 2000 new cases per day, likely the result of our very high vaccination rates with 80% of the population having had the booster (3 doses). To all our GP and FP colleagues, who unwaveringly held the fort and stemmed the surge, and helped to manage the many cases in the community, well done!

We are now all learning to live with COVID. We can enjoy a good night out at our favourite restaurants and dine without concern about limitation of numbers and social distancing. However, a new challenge we are now facing is of a different order altogether; getting a booking is almost like striking a lottery as many of these establishments have firm bookings weeks ahead! Planning a holiday likewise has also become harder than before, as flights are increasing fully booked especially during this festive season. Indeed, it looks like things are finally beginning to go back to the status quo!

In November, we held the College Convocation at The Ritz-Carlton, Millenia Singapore. We were very fortunate to have been able to book the venue, and what a fantastic venue it was! Our last face-to-face convocation was in

2019, so we were so glad that this year we were able to organise a physical event. It was simply wonderful to see so many of our graduands, trainees and colleagues gathered to attend the convocation. Our Guest of Honour, SMS Dr Janil Puthuchery, shared his vision of Healthier SG, with Primary Care and Family Medicine playing a "pivotal and central role in managing preventive care and chronic disease management". This initiative has been the focus of much of the energies expended by our college members and leadership. Fortnightly meetings were held, gathering feedback and working out the bones of the HSG. Indeed, during these past few months, we have had various members of our college council and membership involved in the various committees in Healthier SG, such as Dr Wong Tien Hua, Dr Surajkumar, Dr Elaine Chua, Dr Nelson, Dr Eng Soo Kiang, Dr David Tan, Dr Darren Seah... this list goes on! FP representation is at every level of the development process, and we have the privilege to help shape HSG to be primary care and community centric. This feverish activity will continue until HSG is launched in July 2023. Kudos to the many volunteers who are making such a great sacrifice for this national initiative! Even now in December, the final round of the HSG webinars in 2022 saw some 500 GPs attending. Many queries and feedback were posed to the panel and we look forward to more concrete developments in the year ahead.

In December, we attended the WONCA APR meeting in Bali. It was a good opportunity to meet up with our colleagues from the region, and to come together to share resources and learn from each other. We have much to learn, as College will be hosting the Wonca APR conference at the Raffles City Convention Centre in 2024, and preparations are already in progress!

As we look forward to the year end, with all the attendant holidays and celebrations, many of us will be on long awaited vacations to far off lands. Wherever our travels and celebrations may take us, let us treasure this special time we can spend with family and friends, and savour the moment as we ring out 2022 and welcome 2023.

Wishing you all a Blessed Christmas and a Happy New Year!

■ CM

