



COLLEGE OF FAMILY PHYSICIANS
SINGAPORE

THE College Mirror

VOL. 49 NO. 1 MAR 2023



President's Forum

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

If it doesn't work for you, it doesn't work for us

I had just attended the Healthier SG GP Townhall, which was held on 18 February in the afternoon at the Grand Copthorne Waterfront Hotel.

The attendance was fantastic; arriving at the grand ballroom I was met by many old friends who had also signed up for the townhall. It was lovely to see so many of our colleagues and friends all gathered without the need to wear face masks. Earlier in the week the DORSCON had been downgraded to green, and the very relaxed feel to the event was palpable. In fact, the atmosphere was almost festive, as it was the first time many of us had met each other over the past three years. We were all glad to be there and took the opportunity to renew old ties. That of course did not detract us from what we were waiting for expectantly, and that was the announcements and discussions during the Healthier SG Townhall.

There has been much discussion and concerns about the subsidised drug whitelist, and many of our GPs were affected enough to attend the townhall. In the back of our minds, were there any new developments, proposals and reassurances that would convince them to sign up to HSG?

The afternoon's events were kicked off by Minister for Health, Mr Ong Ye Kung.

In his speech, he acknowledged that primary care played a critical role during the COVID-19 pandemic. The fact that the entire primary care community was able to join together and work towards fighting the COVID-19 scourge speaks volumes of the strength of our primary care community. Out of this crisis we now have a workforce that is more united than ever, and able to tackle health challenges on a national level.

The Ministry of Health facilitated this by providing one-off funding support to improve their IT capabilities, adequate funding, and leveraging on the GP networks.

Now that the COVID-19 pandemic is easing, what we have in place is a very strong network of primary care doctors and workforce that is well suited to addressing the healthcare challenges that we face, namely that of ageing and increasing chronic illness. These systems and processes were strengthened by the COVID-19 crisis, and Healthier SG seeks to tap on them to address the slow, silent, and deadly pandemic of ageing and chronic disease.

The need for a refocus on disease prevention and health promotion is more urgent than ever before as our population is rapidly ageing. Today, 1 in 6 Singapore residents are over 65 years of age; by 2030 that ratio will increase to 1 in 4. Such numbers are mind-boggling as this rate of increase is amongst the highest in the world. Healthier SG seeks to address this by putting in place systems and relationships that support residents in changing their health-seeking behaviours.

(continued on Page 5)

IN THIS ISSUE

5
WHAT IS HEALTHIER SG ALL ABOUT?

7
TOWN HALL MEETING WITH MINISTER

12
CELEBRATION OF AN ICON IN FAMILY MEDICINE
- DR LEE SUAN YEW

14
CARING FOR OTHERS WITHOUT LOSING YOURSELF

24
ICELAND ON FILM

26
ADOLESCENTS & CONFIDENTIALITY IN SINGAPORE

(continued from Cover Page: President's Forum)

Healthier SG's initiative for a Singapore resident to enrol to one family doctor is to encourage the development of a long-term therapeutic relationship that can influence residents' behaviour and lifestyle. Such dividends will only be seen in years to come.

Minister Ong further said that Primary Care must be uplifted, as the linchpin of Healthier SG is our GPs. He reassured us that Healthier SG must work for GPs.

We were all very glad to hear that and look forward to better news in the coming weeks to support the launch of Healthier SG!

Our first Singapore Primary Care Conference (SPCC) is being held on 3-4 March. This will be the first time the College and the three polyclinic clusters have come together to organise a National Primary Care conference. This was originally planned to be held in 2020; however, the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in the conference having to be postponed. Thankfully, as the pandemic situation has improved and social distancing measures withdrawn, we are now able to have a face-to-face physical conference. We were fortunate to be able to secure Raffles City Convention Centre for the event, and we look forward to a great opportunity for academic exchange and networking.

■ CM

What is Healthier SG (HSG) about?

by Dr Ruth Lim, Director, Primary & Community Care Division, MOH

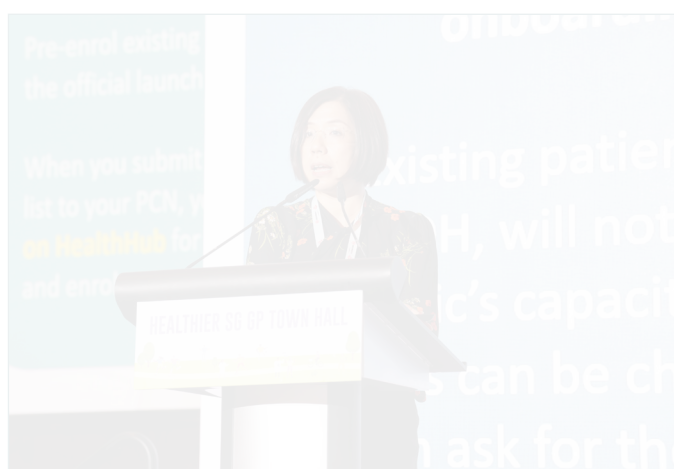
What is Healthier SG (HSG) about?

1. It is about a stronger primary care and anchoring your regular patients with you.
2. It is empowering individuals to lead healthier lives, supported by GPs and the community.
3. It is about shifting towards preventive care and reducing complications in your chronic patients.



The Quadruple Aim of Healthier SG include:

1. Better health outcomes for all our patients.
2. Improved patient experience and empowerment.
3. Quality of care is maintained while we continue to provide value for the healthcare system
4. Improved provider experience, with better support to deliver quality care.



Transformational change needed to achieve these aims:

1. Introduction of national Healthier SG enrolment programme & stronger primary care focusing on holistic, preventive care and building a stronger doctor-patient relationship based on familiarity and trust.
2. Changes in financing to provide fair remuneration for GPs and affordable care for patients.
3. IT enablement & Digitalisation for sharing of patients' information across various care settings to facilitate care-continuity and improve clinics' efficiency.

Benefits to enrolled patients:

1. To take better ownership of their health through a personalised health plan accessible on HealthHub, which will contain health goals and provide guidance on important health actions, such as lifestyle adjustments, health screenings, and vaccinations.
2. Adoption of this healthier lifestyle will be supported by healthcare clusters, family doctors, and community partners with an expanded range of healthy lifestyle activities and services.

(continued on Page 6)