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Editor's Words

by Dr Fok Wai Yee Rose, FCFP(S), Editor (Team A)

Just as the 2023 Budget provided an assurance package to help Singaporeans cope with the rising cost of living, many GPs were heartened to receive reassurance from Minister Ong Ye Kung with regards to his sincerity to make Healthier SG (HSG) work for our primary care partners. At the heart of HSG are the “patients” who have been taken care of by their family GPs for many years and have established a long-term relationship. Many GPs have expressed interest in participating in HSG to continue to look after their own long-term patients. However, the business model and financing scheme needs further review to make business sense to the private GPs. The IT infrastructure needs the heartland GP to employ more digitally literate staff to assist them in meeting HSG requirements in the Clinic Management System (CMS).

An objective comparison of the various CMS is presented by Dr Grace Chiang after interviewing the various providers. The systems will be further reviewed by a panel for user acceptability.

While all of us agree that preventive health is the solution to sustainable healthcare, this requires change, which is often painful. Not only do patients need to change health behaviour, but their GPs also need to change how healthcare is delivered and policy makers need to design innovative implementation models. However, if we do not adopt HSG, do we otherwise have a better solution to meet the increasing complexity of healthcare needs of Singapore, being one of the fastest ageing populations in the world?

Just as COVID-19 has led to GPs working hand-in-hand with the public sector to overcome a national crisis, it remains to be seen if HSG will indeed narrow the private-public divide to provide holistic care for our ageing population. If we believe that optimal patient care is at the heart of all we do, then this calls for a whole-of-nation approach to tackling the implementation pathways to ensure that interests of all stakeholders are

heard, and concerns addressed and provided for in a model that is fair and equitable to all parties.

Dr Lee Suan Yew was honoured for his achievements and commitments to the family medicine community and instrumental in the initiation of formal postgraduate training in family medicine. He shared how he found his true calling in family medicine after completing his training in Internal Medicine. Dr Lee is a family physician who believes that one should not make one's practice into a trade. A family physician must have passion in medicine and practise good medicine for the benefit of one's patients. A family physician must use both one's heart and one's brain. He abides by this tenet from Sir William Osler, “The practice of medicine is an art, not a trade; a calling, not a business; a calling in which your heart will be exercised equally with your head.”

Our veteran GP Dr Lawrence Ng, with special interest in Ethical issues, shares on Adolescents & Confidentiality in Singapore, a timely article in view of the emerging voice of the Mature Minor. He provides the definition of a mature minor and guidance on clinical reasoning in our daily encounters.

On a lighter note, our newly minted house officer Dr Joy Ang shares of her travel to Iceland, a well-deserved trip after the rigour of the MBBS examinations. The photos of the stunning landscape will likely entice many of us to start planning a similar trip in the near future, with COVID-19 restrictions coming to an end!

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