

HIGHLIGHTS

From the Honorary Secretary

Report by Dr Ng Chew Lip

Dr Ng is an ENT consultant in public service. After a day of doctoring and cajoling his two princesses at home to finish their food, his idea of relaxation is watching a drama serial with his lovely wife and occasionally throwing some paint on a canvas.



Amendments to MRA and CLA

On 6 October 2020, the Singapore Parliament debated and passed amendments to the Medical Registration Act (MRA) and Civil Law Act (CLA).

The amendment Bills can be found at the respective links below.

MRA: <https://bit.ly/3o6NAqf>

CLA: <https://bit.ly/3o01jiR>

The amendments to the MRA will implement changes to the Singapore Medical Council (SMC) disciplinary process, based on recommendations of the Workgroup to Review the Taking of Informed Consent and the SMC Disciplinary Process.

The changes will also allow for Academy of Medicine, Singapore, College of Family Physicians Singapore, and SMA representatives in the SMC.

Meanwhile, the CLA amendments will set out the legal test in respect of the standard of care for medical advice given by healthcare professionals.

The provisions will prevail over existing common law on the standard of care for medical advice, to the extent of inconsistency between these provisions and common law.

The amendments do not affect existing common law on the standard of care for medical diagnosis and medical treatment carried out by healthcare professionals.

Forum letter on Integrated Shield Plans

A letter by Mr Tan Yong Kuan was published in the *Straits Times* Forum on 30 September 2020, highlighting that the recommendations of the Health Insurance Task Force have yet to be fully implemented by the Integrated Shield Plan (IP) insurers.

Mr Tan noted that Aviva's decision to not provide coverage to diagnostic endoscopies did not involve changes to its IP terms and conditions, and hence there was no need to seek the Ministry of Health's (MOH) approval. This meant that the current framework gave Aviva considerable latitude to unilaterally and legally change the scope of coverage.

The letter concluded by asking if MOH and the Monetary Authority of Singapore could clarify what the available laws and regulations that can regulate an IP insurer's scope of coverage are.

The forum letter can be viewed here: <https://bit.ly/37kh9hK>.

SMA and the other professional bodies will continue to engage medical practitioners, the relevant ministries and insurers to safeguard the interests of our patients and ensure sustainability in healthcare. ◆