

HIGHLIGHTS

From the Honorary Secretary

Report by Dr Ng Chew Lip

SMC's clarification regarding CME points

SMA recently wrote to the Singapore Medical Council (SMC) suggesting an extension of the Continuing Medical Education (CME) cap for Category 3A (raised from 10 to 20 points) and to award core points for COVID-19-related CME activities for another CME cycle.

In response, SMC has clarified that for doctors whose Practising Certificates are expiring in December 2022:

- (a) CME activities related to COVID-19 will continue to be considered core points for all doctors as requested by SMA, given that acquiring the latest knowledge on COVID-19 is important for all medical practitioners.
- (b) The cap for Category 3A however will revert to 10 points.

We thank SMC for the above clarification.

Healthcare Services Act – updates on implementation

The Ministry of Health (MOH) has issued a circular (No. 162/2021) highlighting that the implementation of Phase 2 and 3 of the Healthcare Services Act (HCSA) will be deferred to the end of 2022 and end of 2023, respectively.

Please refer to the MOH circular at <https://bit.ly/3D8kNbV> for more details.

Some Members have enquired if there has been a change in the vaccination exemption for measles. Please refer to the MOH FAQ on the Healthcare Services (General) Regulations at <https://bit.ly/3krbKfb>, specifically Q37. There is no change to what was announced previously.

"37. We understand that there are exemptions whereby certain age groups need not be vaccinated. Who is exempted/not exempted? Why are there such age-group exemptions?"

- *Healthcare workers who do not have evidence of immunity against measles will have to be vaccinated against measles. The exception is if they are Singaporeans or Permanent Residents (PRs) born in Singapore before 1 January 1975. Serological studies have shown that there is a high level of immunity against measles (~100%) in these cohorts.*
- *There is no age-group exemption for the diphtheria vaccination requirement. All workers in healthcare who do not have evidence of immunity against diphtheria will have to be vaccinated against diphtheria.*

For further queries on HCSA, please contact MOH at HCSA_Enquiries@moh.gov.sg.

Dr Ng is an ENT consultant in public service. After a day of doctoring and cajoling the kids 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.



Clinical Claims Resolution Process established

From 9 November 2021, a Clinical Claims Resolution Process (CCRP) has been established to resolve claim disputes of a clinical nature between private Integrated Shield Plan (IP) policyholders, IP insurers, medical practitioners and medical institutions. IP insurers are also expanding their panels to include a wider pool of specialist doctors by end 2021.

More details can be found at <https://bit.ly/3CacOd3>.

Specifically, the objective of the CCRP is to address clinical-related IP disputes, leveraging the expertise of Academy of Medicine, Singapore specialists and medical directors of the IP insurers. SMA runs a Complaints Committee (CC) which may handle one-off, less complex IP cases raised by medical practitioners which do not meet the "three incidents trend threshold", as well as complaints raised by patients against medical practitioners.

Further information on the scope of SMA CC is available at <https://www.sma.org.sg/feedback>.

As a member of the Multilateral Healthcare Insurance Committee (MHIC), SMA participated in multiple meetings with the other stakeholders in the past six months. There have been many honest discussions and debates on the various problems. We are glad that some progress has been made, and believe that the CCRP will be an avenue for fairness. We also welcome the expansion of the number of doctors on panels. SMA will continue to monitor and seek feedback from our Members as we believe that all patients should have open access to the doctors of their choice, without undue financial pressures from their IPs. In the remaining two-year term of SMA's MHIC appointment, we will continue to work together to ensure fairness for doctors, and for patients. ♦