

Clinic Assistant Train and Place Programme: Venturing into the Heartlands

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We have had three courses, produced 67 graduates and listed more than 100 SMA Members' clinic vacancies since the SMA Clinic Assistant Train and Place Programme was introduced in November 2016. As Singapore focuses on the quality of primary care to meet the rising demands of an ageing population, SMA hopes to help its members, especially those looking for additional staff, to provide better care and services for their patients.

SMA has been working with the Employment and Employability Institute Pte Ltd (e2i) since the programme's inception, so that unemployed members of the public can attend the SMA Clinic Assistant Introductory Skills Course at a subsidised rate of \$50 per person (usual price: \$500, excluding GST). To enjoy the 90% course subsidy awarded by e2i, participants are expected to attend all four days of training coursework (refer to Table 1), and obtain employment (with supporting documents) within one month upon completion of the course.

SMA received feedback from the course graduates that the clinics listed on our Train and Place Portal are often too far from their residences, which would make travelling time-consuming and costly, given the long clinic operating hours. Through statistics generated by a live counter on SMA's website, the Association also recognised that the Northeast region has been among the top two areas in Singapore with a distinctively higher

demand for clinic assistants. Following this observation, and bearing in mind graduates' preference to work nearer to their residences, we decided to bring our information session to the heart of the Northeast region.

Going into the heartlands

On 12 April 2017, SMA and e2i conducted an information session at Anchorvale Community Centre (CC), courtesy of Dr Lam Pin Min, Senior Minister of State for Health and Member of Parliament for the Sengkang West Single Member Constituency (SMC). With the strong support of Dr Lam and his team at Anchorvale CC, more residents in the Northeast region could learn about our programme and attend preliminary interviews by some of our SMA Member clinics. The participants left the Anchorvale CC's multi-purpose hall in excitement over the possibility of obtaining employment opportunities from SMA Member clinics even before the course commenced. Some course participants were subsequently shortlisted from these preliminary interviews and granted second interviews with their potential employers between 20 and 22 April, after each day's coursework was completed.

If you are looking for SMA-trained clinic assistants for your medical practice, you can list your clinic's vacancies on our online platform at <https://www.sma.org.sg/trainandplace> with your membership portal login details. SMA Members can also book their interview slots through

our Train and Place portal. Alternatively, you can contact me (mellissa@sma.org.sg) for direct access to the graduates.

The next two editions of the SMA Clinic Assistant Introductory Skills Course will be held from 19 to 22 July 2017 and 1 to 4 November 2017. ***This service is provided free of charge for SMA Members and their clinics.*** ▶

SMA Clinic Assistant Introductory Skills Course Content

- Understanding the essential role of a clinic assistant
- Managing infection control
- Monitoring vital signs
- Performing electrocardiograms
- Collecting and dispatching biological specimens
- Understanding basic skills in drug dispensing
- Implementing effective communication skills
- Understanding common clinic processes
- Promoting workplace safety and health related issues
- Understanding healthcare schemes and clinic systems

Table 1

Legend

1. The third intake of SMA-trained clinic assistants with Dr Chong Yeh Woei (first row, seventh from the left), Ms Christina Loh (first row, second from left) and their instructors

