

HIGHLIGHTS

From the Honorary Secretary

Report by Clinical Asst
Prof Benny Loo Kai Guo

Dr Loo is a paediatrician in public service with special interest in sport and exercise medicine. He serves to see the smiles on every child and athlete, and he looks forward to the company of his wife and children at the end of every day.



SMA comments on MOH Committee of Supply 2024

The Ministry of Health (MOH) presented plans for healthcare during the 2024 Committee of Supply debate in Parliament on 6 March 2024. SMA responded to a media query from the *Straits Times*, and comments from SMA President Dr Ng Chee Kwan were quoted and published on 11 March.

Providing details on the rising cost of providing healthcare, Dr Ng highlighted that high dependency and intensive care units are costly to run. "Increasingly, diagnosis of many medical conditions requires the use of costly scans such as CT, MRI or positron emission tomography. The use of advanced surgical equipment such as the surgical robot has become commonplace. The standard of care for management of some cancers now includes genetic testing and targeted drug therapies."

Dr Ng further shared that in the outpatient setting, clinic operating costs are adversely affected by the high cost of rentals, and staff wages have also grown to keep up with inflation and the rising cost of living. In addition to direct patient care, time costs are increasingly being incurred when doctors and staff perform back-end work such as submission of claims to insurers and the government.

Last but not least, he opined that as the coverage of MediShield Life expands, insurers should also similarly extend their coverage such that all treatments and procedures approved for claims under MediShield Life are also claimable under Integrated Shield Plan policies.

The *Straits Times* article can be found at the following link: <https://bit.ly/498N3un>.

AMS-CFPS-SMA Tripartite Dinner

The three professional bodies – Academy of Medicine, Singapore (AMS), College of Family Physicians Singapore (CFPS), and SMA – endeavour to meet twice a year to discuss various issues relating to the healthcare system and professional matters.

A dinner meeting hosted by CFPS was organised on 7 March 2024. SMA representatives at the meeting included Dr Ng Chee Kwan (SMA President), Clinical Asst Prof Benny Loo Kai Guo (SMA Honorary Secretary) and A/Prof Anantham Devanand (SMA Centre for Medical Ethics and Professionalism Executive Director). Topics discussed included the new mandatory medical ethics continuing medical education requirements and telemedicine, among other matters. ♦