

FAMILY MEDICINE

Receives Due Recognition

Text by Dr Ng Chee Kwan

The Ministry of Health (MOH) has recently announced that family medicine (FM) will be recognised as a specialty. According to MOH, this recognition will “provide a clear pathway to specialist accreditation for family physicians with advanced training and raise the standards of primary and community care.”¹

It is important to note that there are strict criteria laid out for doctors to become FM specialists. Becoming an FM specialist is not easy and I salute those who qualify. Currently, only those who have attained Fellowship of the College of Family Physicians (Singapore) (FCFP[S]) can be accredited as FM specialists. The FCFP(S) programme is the College of Family Physicians Singapore’s flagship advanced training route, designed to turn an already capable family physician into someone who can teach, do research and manage complex problems. There are currently over 200 registered family physicians who have attained FCFP(S) and are thus eligible to register as FM specialists.

Moving forward, it seems that the future pathway for doctors to become

FM specialists would be to enrol in a new advanced FM programme, and I expect the programme to be equally rigorous.

Not everyone who is a family physician will choose to become an FM specialist. However, those who choose the path to do so will benefit from enhanced professional status, career options and the capacity to lead in primary and community care.

As a specialist in urology, why would I be writing this in support of FM as a specialty? It could be because I have always thought that the family physician is the very embodiment of a doctor, having the breadth of knowledge and expertise to provide primary care for patients with a wide range of medical conditions. The family physician has the potential to become a pillar of the community and touch lives in many ways. Recognising FM as a specialty is an acknowledgment of the role of the family doctor in providing holistic healthcare.

Regardless of whether family doctors choose to take up specialty training, I hope having FM recognised

as a specialty will encourage family physicians to continue to better themselves, for the benefit of their patients and the community. ♦

Reference

1. Ministry of Health. *Recognition of Family Medicine as a Specialty*. 31 October 2025. Available from: <https://bit.ly/44eoEUo>.

Dr Ng is a urologist in private practice and current President of the SMA. He has two teenage sons whom he hopes will grow much taller than him. He has probably collected too many watches for his own good.

