ENHANCED CHAS
— PROVIDING CARE AT PRIVATE GP CLINICS

By Agency for Integrated Care

THE COMMUNITY HEALTH ASSIST SCHEME (CHAS) was enhanced in January this year with the removal of the qualifying age floor and increase of the qualifying household income per person cut-off to $1,800, allowing more Singapore citizens from lower- and middle-income households to receive subsidies for medical and dental care at participating GP and dental clinics near their homes. The take-up rate is expected to grow further from the current 520,000 beneficiaries with the Agency of Integrated Care's (AIC) outreach efforts in the coming months, which will raise public awareness and encourage more potential beneficiaries to sign up for and utilise the scheme. Support from GPs has been crucial to the success of the scheme, and we thank our partners for their continuous support since the inception of CHAS. We would also like to take this opportunity to address the common queries and feedback from GPs with regard to administering the scheme.

Where can I find a one-stop contact point for support or assistance in administering CHAS?

As the appointed agency for CHAS, AIC has been a one-stop contact point for CHAS-accredited GP and dental clinics since 2012, and will continue to be so in 2014. We have dedicated account service managers for each geographical zone to attend to your training needs and urgent IT-related matters. AIC has also provided easy-to-follow reference guides and other related collateral to all CHAS clinics. If your clinic requires more information or additional collaterals, call our hotline at 6632 1199 during office hours. Alternatively, you may refer to the GP/Dentist section of the newly revamped CHAS public portal (http://www.chas.sg/default.aspx?type=gp) to obtain more information.

How extensive is the coverage for common illnesses, chronic conditions and dental treatments under the enhanced CHAS?

Since the inception of CHAS, we have noted feedback from some GPs regarding the coverage of common illnesses. From 1 January 2014, the list of common illnesses covered under CHAS has been expanded to include five new conditions, namely: (i) osteoarthritis, (ii) benign prostatic hyperplasia, (iii) anxiety, (iv) Parkinson's disease, and (v) nephritis/nephrosis.

The list of common illnesses, chronic conditions and dental treatments covered under CHAS can be found on the CHAS public portal (http://www.chas.sg), CHAS online claims portal (https://pcps.gpcare.sg) and other CHAS collaterals.

How much subsidies can patients receive for clinic visits relating to chronic conditions?

GPs should assess the severity of patients' conditions and classify each chronic visit under either Tier 1 or 2. Tier 1 patients have one condition (either on or not on medication), while Tier 2 patients have one chronic condition with complication(s) or more than one chronic condition. The claim made for a chronic visit should reflect the tier assigned to the patient, based on the GP's assessment of the patient's condition for that visit. During the course of managing the patient's chronic condition(s), the GP should reclassify the

patient accordingly if the patient develops complications or has improvements.

There is a per-visit limit and an annual limit on the amount of subsidies that a patient can receive for chronic visits. These limits depend on whether a chronic visit is tagged as Tier 1 or 2. CHAS members can now access transaction details of their chronic visits, and check their balance for the annual subsidy limit for such visits by logging in to the CHAS public portal using their SingPass. Clinics can also help patients check their balances for the annual subsidy limit via the CHAS online claims portal. This will enable patients to better manage their subsidies and utilise them appropriately for visits to address their chronic conditions.

How easy is the claims submission process?

- An interactive keyword search has been incorporated into the acute and chronic diagnosis drop-down lists for claims submission. The items displayed in the drop-down list will be dynamically filtered according to what is typed.
- The new claims submission form will come with the chronic diagnosis pre-filled, according to patient's last visit or CHAS claim submission at the same clinic (regardless of practitioner). Users may amend the default chronic diagnosis if necessary.
- A link has been added to the home page so that users can quickly access the list of rejected claims for follow-up.

- A batch appeal function has been introduced, allowing users to select multiple claims, choose a single appeal reason for these claims, and submit them as a batch.

How will my patients know that my clinic is CHAS-accredited?

One of the newly included features of the CHAS public portal is the clinic locator search function that allows patients to search for their preferred clinics using keywords such as clinic or street name. AIC will also produce hard copies of the latest CHAS clinics directory on a quarterly basis, which will be disseminated to all new CHAS beneficiaries.

The Ministry of Health and AIC recognise the important role that primary care providers play and their care contributions in the larger community make CHAS a success. We acknowledge the feedback that clinics have provided about various aspects of CHAS, such as the claims submission and reimbursement processes, filling up of patient consent forms, etc. We continue to take into account feedback from clinics in our ongoing reviews of CHAS to reduce the administrative workload on clinics.

We appreciate the support given by all CHAS GPs and dentists in administering the scheme, and we look forward to your continued participation in the coming years. We would also like to encourage more practitioners to join the scheme, to serve more Singaporeans in the community. ■

If you would like to provide further feedback or suggestions on how CHAS can be improved, or to find out more about the scheme, please contact the CHAS hotline at 6632 1199 or email gp@chas.sg.