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A/Prof Benjamin Ong Kian Chung
Director of Medical Services
Ministry of Health
College of Medicine Building
16 College Road Singapore 169854

Dear A/Prof Ong,

Clarifications on healthcare need for more “generalists”

The paradigm shift from a specialist and hospital-based model to a primary and community-based (including intermediate and long-term care) model, in order to cater to the future healthcare needs of Singaporeans was recently highlighted at the SMA FutureMed Convention. Many concerns were raised among the medical students and junior doctors through the SMA Doctors in Training (DIT) Committee. Hence, the SMA DIT Committee would like to seek clarification on the following items:

- What would be defined as generalist and non-generalist training for residents?
- What role will generalists play in future healthcare provision, and will they be hospital- or community-based?
- Could you highlight the main strategies to incorporate generalist training for undergraduate and postgraduate training?
- Some residents feel that family medicine residency programme has lack of recognition, funding, support and limited number of mentors. What are the specific measures in place to tackle these concerns?

Without clarity and concrete strategies, many students and junior doctors may not readily take up family medicine and “generalists” tracks. This will negatively impact the translation in healthcare models to better care for Singaporeans in the future.

The SMA DIT Committee aims to bridge the communication to the medical students and junior doctors and relay accurate information, so as to highlight their concerns and to clarify their doubts. If there is a committee reviewing the future training landscape for DIT, SMA would be glad to send a representative to further discuss on the next step forward for the future of our healthcare system.

Thank you.

Yours Sincerely,



Dr Wong Tien Hua
President
58th SMA Council



Dr Benny Loo
Chairperson, Doctors in Training Committee
58th SMA Council