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Changing Healthcare Changing Needs

by Dr Fok Wai Yee Rose, MCFP(S), Editor (Team A)

In November 2017, our Minister for Health Mr Gan Kim Yong's launched the Healthcare Industry Transformation Map (ITM). It involved an enhancement to the National Electronic Health Records System to include key medical information to empower clinicians to make better-informed diagnoses and treatment decisions. And with Singapore's population ageing, more patients may be consulting multiple doctors for varying needs, so having an extensive database of patients' medical history can help make care safer, said the authorities. It will also help doctors seeing patients who are unable to articulate their conditions comprehensively and help them cut duplicate tests. Currently, only about 3 per cent of private healthcare licensees, including general practitioners, private hospitals and nursing homes, are contributing to the national repository. About one in five GPs today still do not have an IT system, according to a survey by the Integrated Health Information Systems (IHIS), the MOH's IT arm¹.

We invite our primary care fraternity to share their perspectives on this initiative and proposed solutions to its implementation.

Following the successful pilot project of Frontier Primary Care Network (PCN) in 2012, PCN received Ministry of Health's endorsement and funding support in 2015 and launched PCN as a mainstream model in 2018. Dr Chong Chin Kwang and Dr Derek Leong share on their challenges and memorable moments in this journey.

Our reorganisation of Western region healthcare cluster culminates in the inauguration of National University Polyclinics (NUP) and Dr Lew Yii Jen, Chief Executive Officer endorses the positive re-clustering experience and importance of team based care to promote holistic delivery, integration and navigation of primary care. Dr David Tan, head of Pioneer Polyclinic

promotes empanelment and benefits of teamlet-based care, a new model of care for better outcomes and continuity of care. Prof Doris Young, head of the newly set up department of Family Medicine, shares her vision in advancing Academic Family Medicine in NUHS and her excitement to bring every family doctor together to enhance teaching, improve services and skill up to do world class research that we can be proud of, driven and led by Family Medicine academics.

Another role for primary care physicians is to lead a multi-disciplinary team to provide community cancer survivorship and Prof Soo Khee Chee, founding director of NCCS recognizes this pressing need in view of the sharp rise in many cancers as a result of aging population, sedentary lifestyle and obesity.

On a lighter moment, we have our lifestyle corner on tips on building a guitar.

Finally, how do we as a Family Medicine fraternity position ourselves to stay relevant in a fast changing landscape? Are we narrowing the divide between specialists and generalists? Do we adopt a paternalistic approach or should we lend our ear to the voices on the ground.

At the end, we often have to reflect on whether we have remained true to the 1st principle of Family Medicine (according to McWhinney), of being committed to the person rather than to a particular body of knowledge, group of diseases, or special technique. In simple words, our patients should always be at the heart of all we do.

1. <https://www.todayonline.com/singapore/moh-compel-private-doctors-submit-info-national-healthcare-database>