

PRIMARY CARE 2.0 – A FAMILY PHYSICIAN FOR EVERY SINGAPOREAN

We have long articulated the need for every Singaporean, with his family, to develop a close, trusting and lasting relationship with his family physician. This is the cornerstone of our efforts to shift the CG of healthcare away from the hospitals and into the community. In order for this to succeed, Family Physicians must be absolutely convinced that they bring value to their patients, in tangible and non-tangible ways. While clinical outcomes can be measured and treatment costs can be quantified and controlled, Family Physicians must believe that their long standing presence and acceptance in the communities where their patients live and work, gives them powerful opportunities to develop unique insights in what really matters to their patients. They must take on the mantle of being advocates of their patients, in ensuring their patients do not suffer from fragmented poorly coordinated care. Understanding the healthcare system far better than their patients, they must step up to help their patients navigate through the whole healthcare system in their journey towards health. Amongst all care providers, they are in the best position to provide holistic care, as they understand best their patient's physical, social and psychological needs.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, primary care is the foundation of any healthcare system. When we focus on delivering empowered primary care, all stakeholders stand to benefit. A greater empowerment of primary

care physicians, to look after the chronic medical needs of our aging population results in many health benefits, including better clinical outcomes, a lowered incidence of end-organ complications and greater patient satisfaction. Family physicians in chronic disease management programmes have seen lower associated hospital admission rates in patients with diabetes, COPD and asthma. Their care has contributed to lower total healthcare costs for their patients.

In completing this Sreenivasan Oration, I must state my belief that the value proposition of Family Medicine does not need defending. What is needed is for you, the community of Family Medicine practitioners, to reflect and agree that your wide roles in the healthcare system legitimately benefit your patients and the healthcare system as a whole. You create value at different levels and you value-add each step of the way, by contributing thought leadership as well as a willingness to innovate and move beyond the comfort zones of what is regarded as traditional primary care. The Ministry very much looks forward to having the College and each of you as valuable partners in our journey to transforming our healthcare system, for better health, better care and better life for our patients.

Thank you.

¹Porter ME, Teisberg EO. *Redefining health care: creating value-based competition on results*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 2006.

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Welcome Dinner for Professor Helen Elizabeth Smith

by Dr Lim Hui Ling, Council Member, College of Family Physicians Singapore



A welcome dinner at Tien Court, Copthorne King's Hotel. (From left) A/Prof Tan Boon Yeow, Dr Lee Eng Sing, Dr Julian Lim, Dr Lim Hui Ling, A/Prof Cheong Pak Yean, A/Prof Lee Kheng Hock, Prof Helen Smith, A/Prof Lim Lean Huat, Dr James Chang Ming Yu, Dr Lim Fong Seng, Dr Ng Lee Beng, Dr Gilbert Tan

Image courtesy of A/Prof Tan Boon Yeow

Prof Helen Elizabeth Smith, was recently appointed Professor of Family Medicine and Primary Care at the Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine (LKC-SoM). This development is greatly welcomed by the College of Family Physicians Singapore and the Family Medicine Community as it spells greater recognition of Family Medicine as an important aspect of medical education and research.

The College together with the Chapter of Family Medicine Physicians, Academy of Medicine jointly held a dinner to welcome Professor Smith to our fraternity and to get to know her better. We met on 21 October 2016 at the Tien Court Restaurant of Copthorne King's Hotel. Council members of the College, and Ex-co members of the Chapter were able to informally find out more about her distinguished background and research interests.

Prior to her appointment to LKC-SoM, Prof Smith was the founding professor of Primary Care at Brighton and Sussex Medical School and was Head of the Division of Public Health and Primary Care. She is also an expert in Primary Care Research Networks.

Over dinner, while introducing her to some local dishes, we shared our thoughts about the state of Family Medicine in Singapore and discussed possible research areas that Prof Smith could consider. This was a fruitful and engaging evening for all of us. There are many possible areas where the College may be able to collaborate with Prof Smith and we look forward to working with her in the future.

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