

**ADDRESS BY DR LIM SHIH HUI
MASTER, ACADEMY OF MEDICINE, SINGAPORE
At the Inaugural General Meeting of the
Chapter of Family Medicine Physicians,
Academy of Medicine, Singapore
17th January 2015, Saturday
Mount Elizabeth Novena Hospital**

**Prof Cheong Pak Yean, Chairman, Chapter of Family Medicine Physicians of the
Academy of Medicine, Singapore,**

Prof Lee Kheng Hock, President, College of Family Physicians, Singapore

Past Masters and Council Members of the Academy,

**Past Presidents and Council Members of the College of Family Physicians
Singapore,**

Friends, Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen:

A very good evening to all of you. I am very glad to be here to witness the Inaugural General Meeting of the Chapter of Family Medicine Physicians. On a personal note, I feel a great sense of relief that I have accomplished one of my important tasks as Master of the Academy.

In June 2011, Kheng Hock and I had a social conversation at the graduation dinner for the first batch of Duke-NUS-GMS students. We were, and are still teaching faculty members of the medical school. During our conversation, we shared our experiences of teaching Duke's students and in Year 2 Neurology and Year 3 Family Medicine clerkships, respectively. Then Kheng Hock shared with me the issues, challenges and obstacles of recognizing Family Medicine as a specialty.

At that time I was the Assistant Master of the Academy. Not sure it was the effect of alcoholic drinks or my desire to challenge myself to overcome impossible, I said to myself that if one day I become Master, I would facilitate the recognition of Family Medicine as a specialty through the Academy.

Let's fast forward to 2014. History was made when the first batch of Family Medicine Physicians were inducted at our Induction Comitia on 25th October 2014.



The 40+ years' journey of recognizing Family Medicine as an important medical specialty was similar to running 42 kilometers in a full Marathon. In order for us to complete this long journey of making changes in the system, culture and mindset, we have to cultivate perseverance and persistence. If we find climbing mountains difficult, then don't climb but go around them, build tunnels through them or remove some major obstacles along the way.

Many of you have heard the old story of “愚公移山”, which described a foolish old man wanting to move 2 hills near his house because he and his family had to make significant detours to go to the other side of the two hills. The moral of the

story is not climbing mountains or removing hills but to have the determination to win victory, and the courage to surmount mountains of difficulties in our life journey.

Helen Keller has said: “alone we can do so little; together we can do so much”. At our Academy, we believe that “alone we can only do so much; together we can do immensely”. Working together with the College of Family Physicians, Singapore, we have now achieved the “mission impossible”: Family Medicine is now one of the specialty Chapters in our Academy.

I would like to thank the Council members and Past Masters of the Academy, as well as President, Past Presidents and Council Members of the College of Family Physicians Singapore, for supporting our joint effort to bring in Family Medicine into our Academy. Our sincere thanks also go Mrs Tan Ching Yee, Permanent Secretary, and Prof Benjamin Ong, Director of Medical Services, who have supported this initiative from the Ministry of Health, Singapore.

The journey does not end here! Though the seed was planted 40+ year ago and the Chapter of Family Medicine Physicians is now formed, this is the beginning of a new “Chapter”. In order to further convince our regulator to recognize Family Medicine as one of the specialties under the Specialist Accreditation Board (SAB), more work needs to be done.

Fortunately more opportunities are coming the next few years for us to show the importance and relevance of Family Medicine in the whole health care system. Fellows of this Chapter have to work closely with Fellows of the rest of the Colleges and Chapters of the Academy, as well as with the College of Family Physicians, Singapore to keep our population healthier, to prevent disease

complications, and to play a leading role in primary, intermediate and long term care. I believe we do not need another 40+ years for Family Medicine to be recognized as a specialty under SAB.

Last but not least, I would like to thank Dr Tan See Ling, one of the Fellows of the Academy, for hosting the dinner tonight.

Thank you all. Have an enjoyable evening.