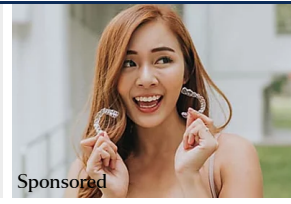




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## Workgroup to review doctors' taking of informed consent, medical council's disciplinary processes



Prof Ng Wai Hoe (left) and Ms Kuah Boon Theng will co-chair the workgroup. PHOTOS: SINGHEALTH, LIANHE ZAOBAO

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Rei Kurohi (mailto:rei@sph.com.sg)

The Ministry of Health (MOH) has appointed a 12-member workgroup to review the taking of informed consent by doctors and the disciplinary processes of the Singapore Medical Council (SMC).

The members include medical and legal professionals, as well as laypersons, MOH said yesterday.

Associate Professor Ng Wai Hoe, medical director at the National Neuroscience Institute and deputy group chairman of the SingHealth Medical Board, and Ms Kuah Boon Theng, managing director of law firm Legal Clinic LLC, are co-chairing the workgroup.

The workgroup was appointed on Wednesday and will gather the views of medical practitioners from different practice backgrounds and the public by the end of this year.

It will then recommend to the MOH practical steps that doctors can take when getting informed consent from their patients and highlight the ethical or legal standards they are expected to follow.

Doctors have to get informed consent from their patients by ensuring that they understand the purpose of a treatment, as well as the risks of potential side effects.

Ms Kuah said in a statement: "When doctors have the benefit of clear practical guidance on how best to serve the needs of their patients, this can only benefit the public. One of the areas of focus will be on informed consent, to help find the right balance, so that it is meaningful to patients and doctors."

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The workgroup will also make recommendations on the SMC's disciplinary processes, such as how complaints are considered and how proceedings are conducted before the disciplinary tribunal.

Prof Ng said: "The review aims to provide guidance that will advocate for patient interests and promote patient care, be fair and reasonable to doctors, and benefit society at large. We will engage widely to strengthen trust in our system and processes."

The announcement comes after SMC disciplinary tribunals imposed hefty fines on two doctors, Dr Lim Lian Arn and Dr Soo Shuenn Chiang.

MOH said that it would work with SMC, the Singapore Medical Association, the Academy of Medicine, Singapore and the College of Family Physicians Singapore to make patient confidentiality issues clearer for doctors communicating with patients' relatives.

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