

**SPEECH BY PROFESSOR TEO ENG KIONG, MASTER, ACADEMY OF MEDICINE,
SINGAPORE AT THE ACADEMY'S VIRTUAL INDUCTION COMITIA ON
SATURDAY, 12 MARCH 2022, 2:30PM**

Guest-of-Honour, Dr Koh Poh Koon, Senior Minister of State, Ministry of Health

Council Members

Fellow Academicians

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

1. A very good afternoon to all of you. On behalf of the Council, I am pleased to welcome you to the Induction Comitia of the Academy of Medicine, Singapore.
2. Let me begin by thanking SMS Koh Poh Koon for joining us this afternoon, to grace and witness this important event of the Academy.
3. This is the first virtual Induction Comitia of the Academy in history. The onset of COVID-19 brought disruptions to the world. We had to hold off this event for more than two years as our healthcare system has been overwhelmed battling the pandemic.

MESSAGE TO THE INDUCTEES

4. Let me begin by offering my heartfelt congratulations to our new Fellows who will be formally admitted into the Academy during today's proceedings. Your induction into the Academy is to recognise your tireless effort, accomplishments and clinical maturity. You will be challenged to lead by your wisdom, your understanding of humanity and, increasingly, by your ability to innovate and to communicate, as you deliver the necessary care to your patients.

5. Although you do not don the academic gown at this virtual event today, the symbolism of the Academy's gown serves to remind us of our ethical obligations as a doctor, our responsibility to serve the profession, and our commitment to remain academic in our life-long medical learning journey. The significance of the Academy's gown is also to remind us that we have a duty to nurture, lead, mentor and inspire the next generation of specialists. I am sure you will perform commendably.

65TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ACADEMY

6. I am pleased to note, this year, the Academy of Medicine, Singapore is celebrating its 65th anniversary. Formed in 1957 with only 34 members, the Academy, with today's induction of new Fellows, will have over 4,200 members housed under 13 Colleges and five Chapters.

7. As rapid advancements in medical technology and medicine are drastically changing healthcare landscape and revolutionizing healthcare system, Fellows of the Academy, now more than ever, must come together to actively serve as a catalyst to influence positive changes for the profession, patients and society. Towards this goal, the Academy remains committed to these three (3) keys strategic priorities: - (a) strengthening advocacy to shape and influence healthcare policies; (b) enhancing self-governance and self-regulation; and (c) advancing professionalism and upholding competency standards.

3 KEY STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

(a) Strengthening advocacy to shape and influence healthcare policies

8. As Fellow Academicians, we have various opportunities and avenues to shape and influence the development of healthcare practices and policies in Singapore. The Academy along with our Colleges and Chapters, actively engages the Ministry of Health, Singapore, in setting professional standards to support a healthcare system that provides high quality, cost-affordable and sustainable care for all Singaporeans.

9. Through the Academy, Fellow Academicians are able to (a) develop evidence-based guidelines and guidance to help healthcare professionals make better decisions in the management of patient care and treatment of medical conditions; (b) contribute to the development of healthcare guidelines and policies and the implementation of wide-ranging healthcare reforms by MOH, government agencies or regulatory bodies through professional representation in the guidelines working committee or workgroup; (c) participate in consultation sessions and contribute inputs and feedback to set professional standards; and (d) express professional opinions, advocating for quality healthcare and standards of professional practice and patient care.

10. The Academy's involvement in many important healthcare initiative and agenda includes ACE Clinical Guidance; National Guidelines for the Safe Prescribing of Opioids (NGSPO); Guidelines on Safe Sedation Practice for Non-Anaesthesiologists; Screening Test Review Report; MOH Table of Surgical Procedures; MOH Workgroup to Review the Taking of Informed Consent and SMC Disciplinary Process; MOH Fee Benchmarks Advisory Committee; Multilateral Healthcare Insurance Committee; Workgroup on the Development of Claims Rules for MediShield Life; SMC Aesthetic Practice Oversight Committee;.. just to name a few.

11. Responding to the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic, now transiting to endemic, the Academy and our Colleges and Chapters, have actively engaged MOH on multiple platforms on infection control measures, vaccination strategies and guidance, medical manpower, and care continuity. Leaders of the Academy and our Colleges and Chapters also spearheaded initiatives to support the medical fraternity on many aspects of clinical care, public health and patient safety, e.g., synthesize and disseminate latest resource, information and evidence; develop COVID clinical practice guidelines and advisories; modify education and training programmes; and participate in public education and advocacy.

12. The Academy is able to fulfil its objectives because it embraces all specialties and combines different perspectives and capabilities. Together, we are well-positioned to bring important and relevant healthcare topics and issues to attention, allowing them to be addressed collectively, appropriately and responsibly.

(b) Enhancing self-governance and self-regulation

13. As Fellow Academicians, we have various opportunities and avenues to enhance self-governance and self-regulation and I urge you to participate and contribute. The fundamental and dynamic changes in medicine and the increased public demand for transparency and accountability in healthcare have challenged the notion and the privilege of self-governance and self-regulation. If the medical profession does not self-govern and self-regulate effectively and responsibly, i.e., failing to maintain public trust and confidence, the medical profession will lose the privilege in time to come.

14. As a medical doctor, we must always uphold our practice of medicine to the highest degree of professionalism. We are also expected to hold our fellow doctors accountable for meeting professional standards and to address lapses in professional conduct and ethical behaviour when they occur. MOH, SMC, SDC, MOM, SPF and Singapore Courts regularly request the Academy to provide advice and opinion on professional standards, clinical practice and healthcare matters. As Fellow Academicians, you are encouraged to respond, contribute and make a difference by playing a vital role in providing professional advice, collegial support and expert opinions on healthcare matters and issues that affect our profession, practice and patient care. The privilege to self-govern and to self-regulate comes with responsibility.

(c) Advancing professionalism and upholding competency standards

15. We are fellow professionals and we will expect you to maintain your clinical competency and professional standards by keeping up-to-date with your knowledge and staying current in your practice. Additionally, I would encourage you to actively participate and contribute to our CME and CPD programmes which provide excellent platforms for networking, establishing relationships, professional recognition, mutual support, and sharing of knowledge, skills, and experience.

16. With the unending changes and advancement in healthcare, standards of competency and professionalism will continue to evolve. It is important for all of us in our profession to stay current and close gaps to deliver the best care for the benefit of patient and their well-being.

17. As our new Fellows, please devote your time to your respective Colleges and Chapters, and eventually serve as a Council member of the Academy. You are our new blood with fresh ideas and I am certain that you, working together with our senior Fellows, will bring our Academy and profession to a greater height.

18. On behalf of the Academy Council, I would like to take this opportunity to record our appreciation to our Fellows Academicians who have selflessly served in the various Colleges, Chapters and Committees of the Academy with commitment, passion and professionalism especially during the unprecedented COVID years. I look forward to you, our newly minted Fellows, to carry the torch with equal dedication and zeal.

PRESENTATION OF PAST MASTER MEDALLION

19. This afternoon, it also gives me honour to present, in due recognition, the Past Master medallion to Dr Sayampanathan, who served as the Master of the Academy of Medicine, Singapore from 2016 to 2020. Unfortunately, Dr Sayampanathan sent his apologies as he is unable to join us this afternoon as he is unwell.

20. Throughout his 4-year term as Master, Dr Sayampanathan led the Academy to forge strong and close relationship with the Ministry and also worked diligently to establish and strengthen ties between the legal and medical fraternities. This confidence and trust between the Academy and our key stakeholders have furthered the development of several collaborative initiatives and programmes which strategically supports our profession in maintaining professional standards and upholding self-regulation. On behalf of our Fellows, I would like to record our gratitude for his leadership, commitment and service.

HOSPITAL CLINICIAN DIPLOMA PROGRAMME

21. Today, we will witness the first graduation of the Hospital Clinician Diploma programme which was a structured training programme launched by the Academy in 2019. The Ministry of Health had endorsed the Hospital Clinician Scheme to offer

opportunities for local doctors, who are keen, to develop a meaningful career as hospital clinicians in broad-based, clinical focused work in public hospitals. Hospital Clinicians will anchor inpatient care services in acute and sub-acute public hospitals in a role complementary to specialists.

22. Roll-out of this pilot programme was challenging but fulfilling, and it would not be possible without the contribution and support from the College of Physicians, Singapore and its Chapters. We would also like commend Dr Anna Tam and Dr Matthew Chong, our inaugural candidates and now graduates, for their courage, patience and dedication for being the pioneers. Their successful completion of the programme marks the start of an HC diploma pathway for our future batches of Hospital Clinicians. The Academy wishes both graduates the best in their career advancement.

CONGRATULATORY NOTE TO MHPE-S AND SRS GRADUATES AND ANNALS REVIEWER AWARD RECIPIENTS

23. Congratulations to our Master of Health Professions Education Singapore (MHPE-S) graduates and Staff Registrar Scheme Diploma graduates. After completing years of arduous training and fulfilling all programme requirements, it is now time to recognise and celebrate your achievements and success. But the road does not stop here, for when one journey ends, another begins. You should strive to do your utmost best in making steady and significant progress towards the betterment of healthcare quality.

24. I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate our *Annals* reviewer award winners who have played an important role in the official medical journal of the Academy. The *Annals* registered its latest Impact Factor of 2.473 for 2020, and 5-year Impact Factor of 2.42. The *Annals* is now ranked fifth among top journals in Asia, and 76 out of 169 in the world under the Medicine (General and Internal) category.

25. Allow me to record my appreciation to our *Annals* Editorial Board, authors and reviewers for their time and contribution to make this achievement possible. At this juncture, I would like to encourage all Fellow Academicians to continue supporting the

Annals by contributing as reviewers and/or submitting good scientific work and articles for publication.

4TH AMM-AMS-HKAM TRIPARTITE CONGRESS AND 55TH SINGAPORE-MALAYSIA CONGRESS OF MEDICINE

26. Before I end, I would like to announce the 4th AMM-AMS-HKAM Tripartite Congress and 55th Singapore-Malaysia Congress of Medicine which will be held virtually on 22nd to 24th July. With the theme '*Diversity and Community in Medicine*', the Congress is anchored by the College of Physicians Singapore and College of Surgeons Singapore, with participation from our sister academies, the Academy of Medicine of Malaysia and Hong Kong Academy of Medicine. Do keep a look out for the Congress publicity and we look forward to your support, participation and fellowship.

CONCLUSION

27. The medical fraternity has a challenging but vital workload to undertake. As healthcare continues to evolve apace, we need to come together to influence practice, transform care and achieve health outcomes that matter for our patients. Every individual one of us plays an important role in advancing medicine and upholding the honour of our profession.

28. Once again, I would like to extend my congratulations to all inductees, graduates and award recipients. I wish you all a pleasant afternoon.