

By Ms Pauline Teo, Project Executive

# Taking the Plunge – Going Into Private Practice

OR WHAT THEY DIDN'T TEACH YOU IN MEDICAL SCHOOL



Tea Break.



The audience.



Participants at the exhibition booths.

Doctors who were interested in setting up a practice attended the Private Practice Seminar held on 15 March 2008 at the Health Promotion Board. The theme “Taking the Plunge – Going into Private Practice” attracted a crowd of more than 100 participants.

Distinguished speakers at the Seminar were Dr Wong Chiang Yin, Dr Wong Tien Hua, Dr Michael Wong, Dr Raymond Chua, Dr Tan Sze Wee and Dr Alex Yeo Sow Nam.

Dr Wong Chiang Yin, President of SMA, started the Seminar with his Welcome Address by giving an overview of the medical landscape. The trends and results of the 1996 Survey of Housing Estate Practice Costs and GP Fees in Singapore and the 2006 Survey of GP Clinic Practice Costs in Singapore were looked into. Various items including clinical set-up costs, practice costs, doctors’ remuneration were used for comparison in the surveys during his presentation.

Dr Wong Tien Hua, Organising Chairman, presented “Digging in for the Long Haul” where he discussed the general practice as a discipline and the different types of practices in the society. The pros and cons associated with solo practice as well as the various factors to take into consideration when setting up one’s clinic were also discussed. He ended the presentation by giving an overview of the Managed Healthcare Schemes and sharing the top 10 tips for having a well-balanced general practising.

Dr Michael Wong, Senior Consultant Urologist of the Singapore Urology and Fertility Centre, Mount Elizabeth Hospital, then gave his presentation

entitled “Just Do It”. He talked about the various factors that led people to practise medicine and to go into private practice. The preparation and research work that needs to be done before setting up the clinic, as well as new issues in private practice were also touched on.

Next, Dr Raymond Chua, Honorary Secretary of SMA, informed the audience of the list of legislative requirements and regulations involved in the healthcare professionalism and practices with his presentation on “Rules of the Game”. The various acts and penalties involved when starting a clinic were also highlighted.

Dr Tan Sze Wee, Council Member of SMA, gave a general overview on the PHMC Advertising Guidelines associated with private practice. The topic “Being Seen in the Scene” also made reference to the *SMC Ethical Code and Ethical Guidelines*.

The Seminar was concluded by Dr Alex Yeo, Council Member of SMA, with the topic “Why you went to Medicine instead of Commerce”. Dr Yeo gave an overview on the accounting requirements and guidelines involved when going into private practice. Rules and examples for claiming of expenses incurred during the course of practice and the issues on tax and GST assessments were also briefly discussed in his presentation.

We would like to thank the 12 sponsors who supported this event. They are BUPA International, CitiBusiness, CrimsonLogic, Dräger Safety Asia, Gloco Singapore, Lozon, Medfin Finance, Novena Medical Center, Pathology & Clinical Laboratory, Rockeby biomed, Xepa-Soul Pattinson and Ms Yona Foo. ■