

GP Landscape Survey Getting to Know Our GPs Better

By Dr Wong Kirk Chuan, Chief Operating Officer, Agency for Integrated Care

With medical advancements and higher standards of living, average life expectancies are increasing globally. This translates into a growing proportion of elderly in society. In tandem with this ageing phenomenon, healthcare demands are evolving concurrently, demonstrating increasing complexities in healthcare needs. This phenomenon, illustrated by many studies, often results in an escalated prevalence of chronic diseases and patients with multiple morbidities. These ramifications of a rapidly ageing population are already felt by many countries and especially evident in developed nations, and Singapore has not been spared.

The Significance of Integrated Care

Many healthcare agencies, like the Agency for Integrated Care (AIC) and the Intermediate and Long Term Care service providers, are being geared to prepare Singapore for the impending ageing population. How Singapore's healthcare system pans out eventually will have an immense impact on you, me and our future generations. I am a believer in driving nationwide initiatives which integrate the various healthcare sectors into a united body. It is through a well-coordinated ecosystem that patients are able to receive appropriate care in a seamless and efficient manner. Being the first point of contact, general practitioners (GPs) are exceptionally instrumental in determining patients' overall well-being. This is echoed by Mr Khaw Boon Wan's (Minister for Health from August 2004 to May 2011) vision of "One Singaporean, One Family Physician".

The Need for Better Understanding

However, through my work in AIC and collaborating with a plethora of stakeholders, it dawned on me that integrating the entire healthcare industry is highly challenging. The GPs, for instance, have largely been working independently and thus embody very diverse issues across the cohort. Hence, before the nation can advance towards integrated care, there is a need to address some of these deeply entrenched issues. The GP Landscape Survey, commissioned by AIC and supported by SMA, aims to gain deeper insights into the domain of GPs and understand the issues they face. While it is by and large a landscape survey, questions which focus on Chronic Disease Management will be posed. Such questions will provide a better understanding of GPs' views on managing chronic disease patients whose numbers are likely to grow proportionately with the ageing population.

Survey Objectives

AIC understands that several surveys, such as the Primary Care Survey by the Ministry of Health, have already been carried out. Hence, AIC has been working closely with the different survey owners and healthcare organisations to optimise the relevance of the GP Landscape Survey. The survey will not replicate questions which have already been asked through other channels. Instead, it will complement other surveys by asking deeper questions which will help to identify the needs and gaps in the GP sector. Essentially, the findings of the survey will allow AIC to form useful baseline information for healthcare providers and policy makers to conceptualise initiatives which will benefit the GPs. This will, in turn, enhance GPs' capabilities in managing the evolving demands of healthcare and integrating with the rest of the healthcare industry.

Methodology

500 respondents will be selected through random sampling to participate in this survey. The research company appointed to conduct this survey on behalf of AIC will make arrangements with the selected GPs to conduct face-to-face interviews with them. Each interview, lasting not more than 15 minutes, will be carried out at the convenience of the respondent. At the end of the survey, analyses will be formulated based on the consolidated findings. All the findings and analyses will then be shared with the different healthcare organisations as well as policy-makers.

GP Support

In my opinion, this GP Landscape Survey is a crucial step in gaining a better understanding of GPs. It is with this better understanding that policies and initiatives can be customised for maximum benefits to the GPs. This survey aims to benefit GPs and the healthcare sector as a whole. Therefore, I look forward to receiving your support if you are selected to participate in this survey. All respondents will receive a report on the survey findings, and also a small token of appreciation to thank them for their participation. Thank you. **SMA**

About the Agency for Integrated Care

The Agency for Integrated Care was set up in 2009 by the Ministry of Health to oversee, coordinate and facilitate all efforts in care integration. Our mission is to achieve best health outcomes for our patients by empowering clients and coordinating access to appropriate care, enable stakeholders to strengthen the primary and community care sectors, and enhancing collaboration to create a well-connected healthcare system. For more information, please visit www.aic.sg.