

Enhancements to the Primary Care Partnership Scheme

By the Agency for Integrated Care

As part of the Ministry of Health's (MOH) efforts to ensure that healthcare remains affordable for Singaporeans, a series of initiatives will be introduced in 2012 to enhance the affordability and accessibility of outpatient care. This includes enhancements to the Primary Care Partnership Scheme (PCPS).

The Agency for Integrated Care (AIC), which was set up by MOH to oversee healthcare integration in Singapore, will serve as the contact point for general practitioners (GPs) and dentists for the scheme from 2012 onwards.

With the expansion of PCPS, both the public as well as GPs and dentists will benefit, as patients who qualify for the scheme can now rely on one physician for their acute and chronic care needs.

What are the changes to PCPS from the first quarter of 2012?

The current PCPS will be enhanced to reach out to a wider group of patients. Under the enhanced PCPS, the qualifying income will be raised from the current \$800 to \$1,500 per capita monthly household income. At the same time, the age criteria for eligibility will be lowered from the current 65 years old to 40 years old. In addition, from November 2011, two more chronic diseases, bipolar disorder and dementia, will be included in the Chronic Disease Management Programme (CDMP) scheme, thus increasing the number of chronic diseases covered to ten.

How many Singaporeans will become eligible for the enhanced PCPS?

There are currently more than 35,000 PCPS members. Over 700,000 Singaporeans stand to benefit from the enhancements if they sign up for the scheme. The changes are aimed at helping more Singaporeans detect and manage their chronic conditions early.

How is the response from the public so far, since the announcement of the scheme?

Since the enhancements were announced, the number of people who have signed up for the scheme has increased by 34% in a single month. The take-up rate is expected to grow as news of the scheme reaches more people through outreach efforts in the coming months.

How do the enhancements benefit GPs and dentists?

As a GP or dentist, these are the key benefits you can look forward to:

- Becoming the primary physician to even more patients in the community as the age limit has been lowered to 40 years of age.
- High potential patient retention at your clinic with the extension of chronic treatment to patients aged 40 years and above.

What are the steps taken to address the needs of GPs and dentists for PCPS?

We note the feedback from medical providers on areas such as claims processes, navigability of the e-claim portal and the user guide for GPs and dentists. We are making gradual improvements to these areas. To help provide greater ease in processing claims, we will be conducting briefing sessions later this year. GPs and dentists will also soon be able to contact the GP/dentist PCPS helpdesk for all PCPS related queries.

When and how can GPs and dentists sign up?

We recognise the important role of medical providers and their contributions in care in the larger community to make this scheme a success.

We welcome all clinics to sign up for CDMP/PCPS now, before the enhanced scheme is implemented. Clinics that are not currently under CDMP can also register to be accredited under the Medisave for CDMP framework when you sign up for PCPS.

Log on to <http://www.mediclaim.moh.gov.sg/mmae/pcpsoverview.aspx> to sign up for CDMP/PCPS. To enquire about PCPS, please contact gp@aic.sg or 6603 6800. **SMA**

The SMA Council believes that PCPS in its concept is a right step towards enhancing primary healthcare in Singapore. Therefore, we would like to encourage our members to play a part in this scheme, noting that AIC has committed to making improvements to the processes to facilitate GPs' participation in the scheme.