

# Championing PCPS

By the Agency for Integrated Care

Since its introduction in 2000, the Primary Care Partnership Scheme (PCPS) has enabled needy families and the disabled to treat their acute and chronic ailments in an outpatient setting. From early 2012 onwards, enhancements to the scheme will include a lowered qualifying age of 40 and a raised income ceiling of \$1,500 per capita household income. These enhancements will help a wider pool of patients manage their chronic conditions in the long run.

We speak to four general practitioners (GPs) who have been on PCPS since its early days. Dr Kong Kum Leng from Marine Parade Clinic, Dr Pauline Neow from Mei Ling Clinic in Queenstown, Dr Goh Wei Leong from Manhattan Medical Clinic in Chinatown, and Dr Loong TW from King Georges' Clinic in Lavender, let us in on why they support the enhancements to PCPS.

### Why did you sign up for PCPS?

**Dr Kong:** I wanted to do my part to relieve patient load at the polyclinics. I saw it as a chance for a private GP like myself to really focus on primary patient care.

**Dr Goh:** I saw the potential of PCPS to help the lower income families and the elderly in the community I serve.

### How do your patients benefit from PCPS?

**Dr Loong:** PCPS enables patients who qualify to seek medical treatment conveniently and at subsidised rates.

**Dr Neow:** Patients with low incomes worry less about the cost of visiting a GP. Visiting a neighbourhood GP is also more accessible for the frail elderly. Another great aspect of the scheme is that I can refer patients on the scheme to Restructured Hospitals at subsidised rates.

### Will the enhancements help more of your patients?

**Dr Kong:** Patients in their 40s already form about 20% of my chronic patients. It is common for the diabetic ones to also suffer from high blood pressure and high cholesterol.

**Dr Neow:** For those in their 40s, early detection of medical conditions enables them to continue to enjoy a reasonable lifestyle. My clinic sees quite a number of blue collared patients under 65 with chronic illnesses such as hypertension and high cholesterol. Most of them cannot afford to take time off work to wait at a polyclinic. Visiting a GP is more convenient because they can visit us after work, or on weekends, and even public holidays.

### What would you like to tell other GPs about PCPS?

**Dr Loong:** There might be a learning curve for the submission process for claims, but it is not too steep and definitely worthwhile for the benefit of the patients.

**Dr Goh:** Your patients really do appreciate the money saved and the opportunity to carry on receiving treatment from one regular GP at a lower cost and greater convenience.

**Dr Neow:** Signing up for PCPS is easy and the reimbursements are also paid promptly within the following month. **SMA**

The Agency for Integrated Care will serve as the primary contact for GPs on all PCPS matters from 2012. For more information about how you can sign your clinic up for PCPS, log on to [www.mediclaim.moh.gov.sg/mmae/pcpsoverview.aspx](http://www.mediclaim.moh.gov.sg/mmae/pcpsoverview.aspx).