

PREPARE FOR PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCIES

By Agency for Integrated Care



Primary Care as First Line of Defence

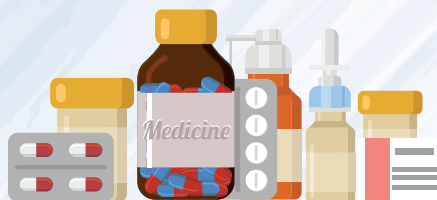
As the first point of contact for most Singaporeans requiring primary care, GPs are also well-placed to provide care during public health emergencies. In such situations, the Public Health Preparedness Clinic (PHPC) scheme consolidates the primary care response to influenza pandemic, haze¹ and anthrax in a single scheme for better management.

The PHPC scheme therefore provides support to participating clinics in providing care for eligible Singaporeans through timely communications and provision of logistical support by MOH. While the specific roles of a PHPC may vary in the face of different threats, the general function of PHPCs remains the same – to serve the primary healthcare needs of Singaporeans in times of national need.

Roles of PHPCs and MOH Logistical Support During Public Health Emergencies

PHPCs will be required to perform one or more of the following roles when activated during a public health emergency :

- Dispense medication (e.g. anti-viral, antibiotics)
- Administer vaccines (e.g. for influenza)
- Provide subsidised treatment to eligible Singaporeans (under the Haze Subsidy Scheme) for haze related conditions



Depending on the type of national health emergency, the Ministry of Health (MOH) will provide the following support to PHPCs:

Table 1: Support from MOH to PHPCs

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)	Up to 12 weeks' supply of PPE for staff at no cost ²
Medications and Vaccines	For staff prophylaxis, up to 6 weeks' supply of influenza anti-virals at no cost. For patient treatment, priority to receive appropriate anti-virals, antibiotics, and / or vaccines from the national stockpile.

Training/Refresher for PHPCs



During peacetime, it is crucial for PHPCs to receive training to ensure GPs and clinic staff are well equipped to provide care for Singaporeans in the face of a threat.

To provide greater clarity for PHPCs with regard to their roles in times of public health emergencies, GPs and clinic staff may refer to the PHPC guidelines, e-learning course and workshops etc., or request for on-site training to familiarise themselves with MOH's guidelines and maintain skills currency.

Communications



As the public health emergency may evolve quickly, clinics are strongly encouraged to regularly update their contact details such as mobile number and email address in MOH Alert, a notification system designed in collaboration with the Professional Boards to enable you to receive instant and easy access to MedAlert, DrugAlert and MedInfo messages and circulars. To update, log into MOHAlert website via your respective Board or Council's website.

Upon signing up to the PHPC scheme and whenever there are changes to the number of staff in the clinic or nominated GP details, PHPCs are encouraged to update the information on relevant platforms such as MOH Claims Portal (MHCP) to facilitate planning.

¹ The Haze Subsidy Scheme (HSS) has been subsumed under the PHPC scheme.

² According to the Licensing Terms and Conditions under the Private Hospitals and Medical Clinics Act (PHMC Act), all GP clinics (including PHPCs) are required to have a baseline stockpile of one week's supply of PPE during peacetime.