



A Big Thank You to GPs for Supporting CHAS and CDMP

By Agency for Integrated Care

THE COMMUNITY Health Assistance Scheme (CHAS) provides affordable medical and dental care to middle- and lower-income Singaporeans, who can receive subsidies when they visit participating private GP and dental clinics near their homes. It complements the Chronic Disease Management Programme (CDMP) so that patients with chronic diseases can also enjoy CHAS subsidies on top of using their Medisave through the CDMP to defray the cost of outpatient treatments for their chronic conditions.

To date, over 580,000 Singaporeans have benefited from CHAS, thanks to the support of more than 650 GP and 400 dental clinics participating in the scheme. CHAS has been a boon to those in need, and also helped to ease the high patient volume at polyclinics as patients on CHAS opt to see their family doctors at neighbourhood clinics instead of heading to polyclinics.

Dr Adidah Hassan, who runs Adidah Family Clinic & Surgery, agrees that CHAS has been very effective on

that count. "With CHAS, many of my patients return to see me, because of the subsidies offered by the scheme. It's definitely more convenient for them, as sometimes the wait at polyclinics can be a few hours," she says.

At the same time, CHAS also encourages patients to continue visiting the GPs they prefer, as they value having one doctor tend to all of their healthcare needs. Dr Koh Eng Hoe of Healthway Medical Group notes this trend: "Once they are eligible for CHAS, patients tend to come back to us, because they want to see the same doctor. Now they can enjoy our services and receive better medications under CHAS."

Meanwhile, Dr Ng Boon Gim of Tai Seng Clinic believes that CHAS encourages his patients with chronic illnesses to better manage their conditions. "In the past, my patients would refuse to have medical tests done because of the cost. With CHAS, they now have no excuse to avoid doing the medical test. These tests are important ways to help my patients keep their conditions well under control," he says.



Doctors weigh in on CHAS and CDMP

"In the past, I've actually seen patients who are so poor, that I've had to give them discounts on my own, so the schemes help us both. CHAS and CDMP also help us to retain patients, as they will come back often to us."

— Dr Chua Teo Ngee of Chua Medical Centre, which has been under the CHAS scheme for a few months

"I see an average of ten CHAS patients every day, and the scheme, along with CDMP, makes it easier for them to manage their health conditions."

— Dr Tan Teing Ping of Medipoint Medical Centre (Punggol Branch), which has been under the CHAS scheme for two years

A strong dedication to patient welfare drives GPs and their staff, who make it a point to explain CHAS and CDMP to all their patients. Some even help patients to fill in the application forms.

In appreciation of the private clinics' efforts in actively promoting the schemes to patients, Ministry of Health and Agency for Integrated Care organised a special luncheon for the GPs.

The GP Appreciation & Continuing Medical Education (CME) Event, which was held at the Marina Mandarin Singapore on 22 March 2014, saw a good turnout of over 130 doctors. In addition, the top 50 clinics with the highest CHAS and CDMP utilisation rates were recognised for their unstinting support. The event was also an excellent platform for doctors to network, listen to the informative talks given on the additional chronic diseases that CHAS now covers, and exchange views. Naturally, conversations revolved around CHAS that day, in particular how it has improved the community as a whole.

One thing that all doctors agreed on was that CHAS is a win-win partnership for private clinics, patients and the Government. As Dr Ow Boon Hin of Universal Medical and Dental Clinic puts it: "With CHAS, we can all work as a group to help patients. It's good that the Government is helping to subsidise healthcare for the people, especially the elderly, which is why I'm thinking of joining CHAS as well."

These words hold great promise for the future of CHAS and CDMP, as GPs play a vital role in ensuring the continued success of the schemes. With more GP and dental clinics coming on board, Singaporeans young and old can look forward to having subsidised healthcare within easy reach. Curious about CHAS and CDMP? Find out more by contacting AIC at gp@aic.sg.

For information on the CME talks presented at the appreciation event, you may download the relevant presentation slides of the talks from <http://www.primarycarepages.sg>. ■

GP Appreciation & CME Event

Date: 22 March 2014

Venue: Marina Mandarin Singapore

CME talks:

- "SUA Clinical Guidelines on LUTS/BPH 2014" by Prof Foo Keong Tatt, Emeritus Consultant, Department of Urology, Singapore General Hospital (SGH)
- "Update on Treatment of Osteoarthritis of the Knee" by A/Prof Lo Ngai Nung, Senior Consultant, Department of Orthopaedic Surgery, SGH
- "Management of Parkinson's Disease in the Primary Care Setting" by Dr June Tan, Senior Consultant, Division of Neurology, National University Health System

Contact us at gp@aic.sg if you would like to sign up as a CHAS clinic, or if you have any further enquiries.