

## Newsletter

July 2017

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## Appropriate Care Guides Published in Support of the Ministry of Health's "War on Diabetes"

On 3 July 2017, the Agency for Care Effectiveness ("ACE") published its inaugural Appropriate Care Guides ("ACG") on "Oral Glucose-Lowering Agents in Type 2 Diabetes mellitus" and "Managing Pre-Diabetes".

ACGs were developed in support of the Ministry of Health's ("MOH") "War on Diabetes" in light of the growing concern of diabetes in Singapore, and complement the existing MOH Clinical Practice Guidelines on Diabetes, last issued in 2004. They are aimed at equipping clinicians to better care for diabetic patients, by providing concise and evidence-based recommendations on how prescriptions can be better tailored to the individual.

The ACG on "Managing Pre-Diabetes" recommends the systematic management of pre-diabetes, through pharmacological measures as well as sustainable lifestyle intervention that is suited to individual needs and implemented through diet and physical activity.

In the ACG on "Oral Glucose-Lowering Agents in Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus", guidance is similarly provided on individualizing treatment plans based on drug and patient profiles. The latest updates on oral glucose-lowering agents such as SGLT-2 inhibitors and DPP-4 inhibitors are presented, along with an analysis of their effectiveness, risks, and appropriate use in varying patient profiles.

More details can be found in the Ministry of Health's Press Release [here](#), and soft copies of the ACGs can be found [here](#).

## Participation in the National Electronic Health Records Could Become Mandatory for the Private Sector

At present, all public healthcare institutions use the National Electronic Health Records (NEHR). However, only 40 clinics out of more than 2,500 general practitioners and specialist clinics do, despite the Ministry of Health's persistent encouragement for greater participation since the NEHR's launch in 2013.

The NEHR is a patient data exchange system that enables clinicians and healthcare professionals to access a patient's healthcare records across the national healthcare network. This was enacted to enable healthcare professionals to make more informed patient care decisions based on a consolidated view of the patient's healthcare history. However, concerns from the private sector arose as to whether this would compromise the confidentiality of a patient's healthcare records.

Now, discussions amongst ministry officials are underway to make participation in the NEHR a licencing requirement under a new Healthcare Services Act, so that private healthcare institutions will be required to share their patients'





information on the national database. Officials from the Ministry of Health have been gathering feedback from doctors' groups such as the Singapore Medical Association on such a move. A public consultation on the Healthcare Services Act is also targeted for the end of 2017.

More details can be found in the article [here](#).

## Advanced Medicine Oncology Centre: New Cancer Research Centre to be Built at Biopolis

Royal Philips, the Singapore Institute of Advanced Medicine Holdings (SAM), Varian Medical Systems and IBA World-wide are collaborating to build a new cancer centre at Biopolis, that will be open in stages from 2018. Named the Advanced Medicine Oncology Centre, it will provide imaging, treatment delivery, and clinical informatics technologies for healthcare professionals and researchers.

According to Dr Djeng Shih Kien, SAM's founder and chairman, the new centre will "seek to provide earlier detecting and first-time-right diagnosis of cancer, as well as safer, more cost effective treatment by advancing care enabled through research, tech and education".

SAM is investing up to \$100 million in the centre, which will also aim to address cardiovascular and neurological disorders in the long term, such as stroke and Alzheimer's disease.

More details can be found in the article [here](#).

## ElderShield Claims Process Currently Under Review

The ElderShield Review Committee has set up a Claims Assessment Sub-Committee to review and gather feedback on how the ElderShield claims process can be improved. Amongst other things, the Sub-Committee will look into ensuring that patients and their family members can more easily access information relating to their ElderShield coverage and how to make a claim. This involves identifying key points along the care process that severely disabled patients go through where information can best be provided, and working with frontline staff to guide families through the claims application process.

The ElderShield Review Committee has also suggested looking into the feasibility of Government administration of ElderShield. Presently, three private insurers administer the scheme, and participants have suggested that the approach should be simplified by having the Government administer the scheme as the sole provider.

More details can be found in the Ministry of Health's press release [here](#).

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