

## FAQS ON DECLARATION OF HEALTH CONDITIONS

### **Q1) Why do I need to declare to SMC if I have any health issues?**

SMC has an obligation to ensure that doctors provide safe medical and professional care to the public. As a result, SMC requires doctors to declare whether they have any health condition which may impair their fitness to practise and provide safe care when they apply for medical registration, upgrade their registration status and when they apply to renew their practising certificates.

Doctors are also expected to voluntarily report to the SMC at other times, if they discover they have health conditions that impair their fitness to practise and provide safe care. This is a requirement under the SMC's Ethical Code and Ethical Guidelines.

To be clear, the health condition may be a physical or mental health condition, which affects your ability to make proper clinical decisions concerning your patient's care, affects your ability to provide safe care and/or act professionally to your patients, their care-givers and your colleagues.

### **Q2) Why is there a need for specialist/medical reports to be submitted to SMC after declaration?**

If you report that you have a health condition that may impair your fitness to practise and provide safe care, the SMC will require you to provide further details on your condition, so that SMC may properly assess the extent that your condition affects your ability to provide safe care. This is through a specialist report, from the specialist who is treating you for the health condition.

The medical report will generally describe your health condition and explain how the condition affects your ability to practise as a doctor and provide safe care. It will also clarify whether your health condition is stable and in remission or requires further treatment and whether you need to be on regular follow-up with your doctor.

With this information, SMC is able to assess whether your health condition adversely influences your ability to provide safe and proper care for your patients. If you are unable to do so, SMC may introduce restrictions to your registration to minimise any risk of harm to your patients or require further supervision to ensure that your care of your patients is not compromised. The conditions to enable you to continue practice may also require you to remain under the care of your doctor. This is for your welfare and to ensure that your health condition is properly treated.

You are responsible to provide the required information for SMC to make a proper assessment of your fitness for practise. SMC will generally not liaise with your doctor directly but may seek further information from your doctor with your permission, if the submitted information is not sufficient to make a proper assessment of your health condition. To expedite the processing of your registration or practising certificate application, SMC may request that your doctor send his medical report directly to SMC.

**Q3) Does SMC disclose my condition to employers e.g. MOHH or the Healthcare Institution?**

SMC respects your confidentiality and will not disclose information about your health condition to your employer, or the healthcare institution you work in, without your permission.

If it is important that your employer or the healthcare institution you work in better understand your health condition, in order to support you in providing proper and safe care to your patients, or to support your health needs, SMC may require you to provide information on your health condition to your employer or the healthcare institution you work in. In order to respect your medical confidentiality, disclosure of your medical information will not be done by SMC.

**Q4) Do medical schools provide information of my condition to SMC upon graduation?**

Medical schools do not generally share information concerning the history of their students' health conditions with either MOH or SMC after they graduate.

If you declare to SMC at any time that you have a health condition that may affect your fitness to practise as a doctor, or to provide safe care to your patients, and indicate that this health condition had been present when you were a medical student, SMC may seek further information from your medical school about the status of your health condition at that time, if it is relevant to assessing your health condition at present. This may be relevant if it clarifies how long your health condition has remained stable and in remission, or if you have had exacerbations of your health condition which affected your work.

Such information obtained from the medical schools will not be shared with your employer or the healthcare institution that you work in, without your permission.

**Q5) What will happen after I declare a health condition in the application forms?**

1. If a medical report is required, SMC will send an email to your registered email address requesting you to obtain a medical report from your doctor. The required information to be included in the medical report are:
  - a) Primary diagnosis and comorbid condition (if any).
  - b) Type of medication, therapy or treatment received.
  - c) Whether the patient is on active follow up and the frequency of review.
  - d) Is the condition in remission and the considered date of remission.
  - e) Is the patient fit to practise (i.e. safe to practise) as a medical practitioner.

The medical report will then either be submitted by yourself or by your doctor directly to SMC. The cost of the medical report will not be borne by SMC.

2. SMC will seek your assistance or permission if it requires any clarification or further information from your doctor.

3. To prevent any delay in your application, please ensure that all required documents or clarifications are submitted in time.
4. After assessment, SMC may require some or all the following before granting you registration:
  - a) that you disclose your health condition to your employer
  - b) inform your Head of Department and/or clinical supervisor of your health condition,
  - c) submit regular medical reports from your physician certifying your fitness to practise. Further details pertaining to this will be given accordingly.
5. Your subsequent PC renewal application may require a submission of a medical report, and SMC may advise on whether you should apply for a one-year or two-year PC.
6. For provisionally registered doctors from the medical schools in Singapore, conditional registration may be granted instead of full registration after PGY1, if your health condition is not under control or in remission. This is because there may be a need for you to remain under supervision or to continue follow-up with your doctor to verify that your health condition remains controlled or in remission. The same requirement applies if your doctor reported that your health condition was only recently brought under control.