

LEADING HEALTHCARE

The newsletter of the Healthcare Leadership College

Dean's Message

Doing What is Right

No one in healthcare will disagree that we need leaders with the right values. By and large, we select for them. The true test comes when leaders need to display these values. They can, but only if they have sufficient moral courage to overcome any possible risk to themselves or their careers.

During World War 2, General William Slim was defeated in Burma by the Japanese army. He reorganised in India and went back into Burma to inflict the greatest land defeat of the Japanese army. Lord Louis Mountbatten regarded him as the finest General World War 2 had produced. General Slim thought moral courage primordial in his commanders and defined it as such: "Do what you think is right without thinking too much about the effects on your person".

This is particularly apt for healthcare. Leaders should have the moral courage to do the simple and right thing. And not worry too much about the effects on their person.

The College is committed to developing healthcare leaders who have not just the right skills but the right values.

Associate Professor Aymeric Lim
Dean, Healthcare Leadership College
Chairman, Medical Board, NUH

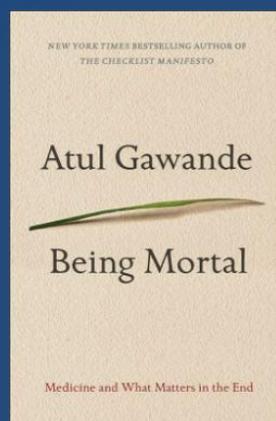
Welcome to the inaugural issue of Leading Healthcare! Through this newsletter, we hope to connect and stay in touch with friends and alumni of the Healthcare Leadership College. Find out about our latest events and programmes, gain insights from senior healthcare leaders, and share learning experiences with the healthcare community.

Highlights



The Ministry of Health's Permanent Secretary Mr Chan Heng Kee provides perspectives on our healthcare system and leadership: Pages 2 - 3

Distinguished Speaker Dr Atul Gawande gives a stirring speech about what matters to terminally ill patients and their families: Pages 4 - 5



Insights and Perspectives

Mr Chan Heng Kee - Permanent Secretary (Health)



Mr Chan Heng Kee, Permanent Secretary (Health)
(Photo: MSF / MOH)

Mr Chan Heng Kee was appointed as the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Health in May 2016, and has been busy working on healthcare issues and policies, as well as spending time understanding the concerns of healthcare professionals and workers.

The Healthcare Leadership College brings you his hopes for training and development of our healthcare leaders, excerpted from a speech to the Singapore Chief Residency Programme participants and senior healthcare leaders in September 2016.

On Singapore's healthcare system:

Whichever way you look at it – whether it is health and treatment outcomes, access to health services, or efficiency of spending – Singapore is not doing too badly. I thank members of our healthcare family for their contributions.

Yet, we also know that our healthcare system must transform. Because we are ageing rapidly, disease patterns are changing, public expectations are shifting. And because we face manpower and fiscal constraints.

On the College's role in transformation:

Transformation in healthcare requires not just good plans, hardworking and skilled people, adequate resourcing and careful execution. At its core, transformation in healthcare requires aligning and orchestrating the many leaders and players within the system. This is where I feel the HLC programmes play a role that is so important.

On hopes for the College's programmes

There are 3 things I hope the College's programmes can achieve. **I call it the 3 Cs.**

The first C is obvious – that's "Competencies". Picking up knowledge and skills and learning from one another so as to perform better at our jobs and roles.

The 2nd C is "Context".

By "Context", I mean an understanding of the larger picture.

What is our current system and thinking and why are we doing what we do? Where are we doing well and where do we need to improve? What are our larger goals and which direction are we heading towards?

With an appreciation of the larger context, you will be able to better understand where you fit in the system, and how you impact things. And why the work you do is so important. This in turn has a bearing on how you practice, how you work with your colleagues, how you treat your patients and what you say to them, which in turn affect whether we have a successful transformation in healthcare.

The 3rd and final C I hope HLC programmes can deliver is "Community".

This programme has brought all of you from different institutions and specialties together. I hope that that you will continue to stay in touch after the programme.



SCRP Cohort 3 Team-bonding. (Photo by: HLC)

And I hope that HLC programmes build participant cohorts that will grow into lasting communities of mutual support as you progress in your careers, and onto positions of greater challenges and responsibility.

Distinguished Speaker

Dr Atul Gawande: Medicine and What Matters in the End

By Wong Hui Min

On 29 August 2016, the Agency for Integrated Care (AIC) and the Healthcare Leadership College (HLC) co-organised the Distinguished Speakers Series - a keynote lecture by Dr Atul Gawande, attracting over a thousand attendees from across Singapore's public healthcare family.

Dr Atul Gawande, MD, MPH, is a surgeon, writer, and public health researcher. He practices general and endocrine surgery at Brigham and Women's Hospital. He has been a staff writer for The New Yorker magazine since 1998 and has written four New York Times bestsellers.

At the lecture, Dr Gawande gave a thought-provoking talk on his latest book, "Being Mortal: Medicine and What Matters in the End", centred on the story of his daughter's piano teacher, Peg, who had advanced cancer.



Dr Gawande addressing a crowd of over a thousand during the question and answer session. (Photo: Agency for Integrated Care)

"Powerful speaker and inspiring. As a Social Worker and Allied-Health leader supervising a team of MSWs supporting patients and family caregivers coping with illness, his sharing allowed me to reflect on our practice and I really wish our clinicians can internalize the key messages he was trying to convey: about conducting serious illness conversations and trying to give people the best possible day under the circumstances."

Ms Long Chey May, Head, Medical Social Services, JurongHealth

Dr Gawande shared Peg's struggles with the hospital treatments and how she made the decision to transfer to a hospice, where she lived out a meaningful last six weeks of her life: teaching piano and bidding a final goodbye to her students.

Using Peg's story to illustrate a compelling analysis of the issues concerning end-of-life care, Dr Gawande highlighted that patients have priorities beyond merely being safe and living longer. The opportunity for patients to make informed choices that reflect their values, reduce suffering, enhance family well-being and improve quality of life is essential to sustain meaning in life, so that they are still able to live their "best day possible" under the circumstances.



Dr Gawande's key message to us is: the ultimate goal is not a good death but a good life – all the way to the very end.

"The talk reinforced my belief that to understand patients we need to learn their story. The practice of medicine should never dissociate itself from patients' wishes while chasing better outcomes. As doctors, sometimes the hardest thing to do is listen as we feel the need to speak."

**Dr Jai Prashanth Rao,
Consultant, Neurosurgery
(TTSH Campus), National
Neuroscience Institute**

"Dr Gawande is a communicator par excellence. Though many of us know the fundamentals of palliative care and advance care planning, he makes the topic all the more real, urgent and personal. I went home with a resolve to effect changes in my own sphere of influence, and to have those crucial conversations with my own parents as soon as possible."

Dr Loh Yik Hin, CEO, St. Andrew's Community Hospital

"Conversations with patients and families to involve them in planning their healthcare is of utmost importance. All healthcare professionals need to be mindful of their practice and not be prescriptive. Who should determine whether a patient should live or to die with dignity? How can healthcare professionals facilitate the most humane decision?"

Ms Jenny Goh, Manager, Medical Social Service, Khoo Teck Puat Hospital

Upcoming Programmes

9th Healthcare Policy & Governance Programme
(Segment A)
4th – 6th October 2016
(Participation via nomination)

6th Healthcare Policy Series –
Capacity Building for our Healthcare System
12th October 2016 (Wednesday)
(Participation by registration via Eventbrite)

Distinguished Speakers Series –
Lecture by Mr Lim Siong Guan
2nd November 2016 (Wednesday)
(Participation by registration via Eventbrite)

Dynamic Governance –
A Healthcare Perspective
9th – 11th November 2016
(Participation via nomination)

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About the Healthcare Leadership College

The Healthcare Leadership College, a division of MOH Holdings, supports the building of strong leadership capacity and capabilities for our national public healthcare system, in line with the Ministry of Health's vision and strategic priorities.

We develop and deliver high quality programmes and other learning platforms for public healthcare leaders, covering topics such as leadership and organisational development, public service ethos and values, and key healthcare policies and issues.

Leading Healthcare is a quarterly newsletter of the Healthcare Leadership College. Issue 2 will be published in January 2017.