The centering around two motifs – the bamboo and chrysanthemum – both are resilient plants that can withstand harsh weather conditions, blooming and thriving through the frost and snow, is a nod to the challenging environment presented by the Covid-19 pandemic.

The tagline, 'Come Back to Go Forward' beacons members to bravely come out from their fear of the Covid-19, so as to move on in this new normal.
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CORPORATE INFORMATION

Established in October 1993, Epilepsy Care Group (Singapore) (ECG) is a social service agency that addresses the needs and concerns of people with epilepsy, their families and those in the community directly affected by the condition.

ECG is registered under the Societies Act, Chapter 311 on 12 December 1995 and Charities Act, Chapter 37 on 2 October 1996 and is domiciled in the Republic of Singapore. ECG is an approved Institution of a Public Character (IPC) from 9 August 2020 to 8 August 2022.

ECG has a Constitution as its governing instrument.

ECG is governed by the Executive Council, which is a governing body responsible in providing strategic direction and oversight of its programmes and objectives and steering it towards fulfilling its vision and mission through good governance. Reporting to the Executive Council are Sub-Committees that look into specific areas.

ECG is also headed by an Executive Director who was appointed to position since 1 June 2000.

Dr CHOONG Chew Thye
President

Diana KOH Hwee Hoon
Vice President

Sherman GOH Keng Hwee
Honorary Secretary

ANG Wei Jie
Assistant Secretary

LEE Soon Chua
Honorary Treasurer

TAN Zheng Yuan
Assistant Treasurer

GOI Ming Ying
Welfare Officer
CORPORATE INFORMATION

Registered Office
3779 Jalan Bukit Merah
#02-03 Bukit Merah Community Hub
Singapore 159462
Tel: (65) 6358 0566
Email: ecgs93@singnet.com.sg
Website: www.epilepsycare.org

Solicitor
Mr Anand Nalachandran, Senior Director
Forte Law LLC
25 North Bridge Road
#01-02 EFG Building
Singapore 179104
Tel: (65) 6505 0210 Fax: (65) 6505 0219
Website: www.fortelaw.com

Auditor
Tan, Chan & Partners
Certified Public Accountants
26 Eng Hoon Street
Singapore 169776
Tel: (65) 65337393 Fax: (65) 65336831
Website: www.tanchan-cpa.com

Principal Banker
United Overseas Bank Limited
1 Park Road #01-01/02
People’s Park Complex
Singapore 059108
Tel: (65) 6535 3444 Fax: (65) 6535 0956

Affiliates
International Bureau for Epilepsy (IBE)
Office 0208
Nesta Business Centre
4-5, Burton Hall Road
Sandyford, Dublin D18
A094, Ireland
Tel: (353) 86 891 4046
Email: donnawalsh@ibe-epilepsy.org
Website: www.ibe-epilepsy.org
(EGC is an IBE Member since February 1998)

National Council of Social Service
170 Ghim Moh Road #01-02
Singapore 279621
Tel: (65) 6210 2500 Fax: (65) 6468 1012
Website: www.ncss.org.sg
(EGC is a NCSS Member since 1 May 2014)

Council Members

Calvin KOH Chin Khoon

Dr TEOH Jian Hung

Hayden TAN Hui Wen

Calvin Schaffer ZHONG

CHEONG Jie Hui

Board of Consultants

Prof Michael CHEE Wei Liang
Dr LIM Kim Whee
Dr Adrian WANG
Dr Vijayan LOGANATHAN

Executive Director/
Epilepsy Counsellor

Sherman GOH Keng Hwee
There were many measures enforced over the past one year. ECG thus adopted a more cautious risk containment approach towards engaging its members.

It was only from 16 February 2022 that ECG is in a position to make a significant move to ease the social management measures to five key parameters, namely, i) group sizes; ii) mask-wearing; iii) workplace requirements; iv) safe distancing; and v) capacity limits, and make further progress towards living with COVID-19.

Now that the lifting of the Covid-19 restrictions were effected in April 2022, ECG looks forward to an electrifying encounter with every one of you.
MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Members, Friends and Supporters

In February 2020, Covid-19 arrived. For the next two years, the world was gripped in a terrible pandemic. Thankfully, the pandemic did not force ECG to abandon our activities. In fact, it fortified us to reengineer our activities and priorities, while reducing physical gatherings, transposing into virtual platforms and zoom meetings.

The pandemic taught us that life is complex. It is not what it used to be, and yet we still have to make the best of it. I am grateful by the way the ECG executive council and volunteers rallied together to address the needs of our members during this difficult volatile period.

We can now move forward with hope, with tenacity and perseverance, knowing and believing that things will get better.

Can epilepsy be prevented? Unfortunately, at this time, there is no medication or therapy that can prevent epilepsy. What is beneficial is to address the risk factors that cause epilepsy, e.g., providing good perinatal care, reducing brain infections, brain trauma, stroke, immunological disorders and toxins that are harmful to the brain.

Worldwide, there are at least 60-70 million persons with epilepsy. Research advances have led to a better understanding of epilepsy and its treatment. Many persons with epilepsy lead productive lives, but some will be adversely affected by their epilepsy. While attitudes towards epilepsy have improved through the years, misinformation, misperceptions and lack of information about epilepsy are still prevalent, contributing to stigma and discrimination. Stigma leads to isolation, anxiety, loss of self-esteem, adding to the burden of epilepsy and impacting the physical, mental and social wellbeing of persons with epilepsy. It behoves us all to work towards reducing/eliminating stigma.

One of ECG’s principal goals focuses on promoting community awareness with acceptance of persons with epilepsy. We will organize more ‘Living Well with Epilepsy’ forums. We will work with healthcare professionals, corporates and the community on epilepsy awareness. We will engage more persons with epilepsy and their families to support the awareness and education programs. Surveys have found that persons with epilepsy who are willing to discuss their disorder openly can have a profound positive influence on friends and family members. By sharing their stories, persons with epilepsy become vital members of the public education efforts.

Thanks to everyone who has supported ECG over the years - ECG members, families, volunteers, students, corporates, donors and sponsors, the Ministry of Health, the National Council of Social Service. Your collective efforts through activity engagement, fundraising, spear-heading activities, education and advocacy, have enabled ECG to continue its work.

I have been continually blessed and inspired by the immense support from the Executive Council, the Board of Consultants, our legal advisor Mr Anand Nalachandran and our sole ECG staff executive director, Mr Goh Keng Hwee. Their dedication and commitment are truly appreciated. I look forward to your continued support and remain confident that together we can make the world a beautiful place to live in.

As we move forward to celebrate epilepsy, do remember these spiritual boosters: 
**Timeouts** - take breaks to give life meaning, to avoid burn-out, to reflect, to recharge, to remember all the good stuff that is happening.

And remember the power of laughter and the ultimate power of love.

Best Wishes, Good health and Happiness.

DR CHOONG CHEW THYE
President
MESSAGE FROM THE VICE-PRESIDENT

Dear Members and Friends,

We greeted the lifting of the Covid-19 restrictions in April 2022 with great relief and joy, after a long two-year, both local and global.

Yet, that mood of celebration was soon tinted with a sense of strangeness to an altered normalcy. While there might be some excitement of a new normal, it is more of sadness with a denial of the changes. I lost four people whom I valued within the two-year period of restrictions, which was unprecedented. Is this the correlation between isolation, longevity and quality of life? What made it unacceptable and thus my regret was the lost opportunities for last words with them due to the reduced social mobility impacting on communication that resulted in families having to manage their own affairs. It was heart-breaking when a family shared that a note of encouragement written by me many years ago to one of them, was kept and treasured.

On deeper reflection, I realise that I invariably reclaimed from the lost years in terms of the re-connection to the people whom I have lost contact at the wake, and the strengthening of ties with their remaining family members. The legacy does continue albeit in an altered way, to renew and relate.

Intra-personally and inter-personally, as the altered world returns, what have we identified in ourselves that has changed? And what have we identified in Epilepsy Care Group (ECG) that has changed? The prolonged isolation does impact one's mental health as well as causes us to have a narrow view of life, affecting our behaviour towards others such as getting easily annoyed.

A lecturer once enlightened us - when someone made us mad, it might not be about that person, it is about me. Examine what is it in me by way of any underlying auto-thinking/own point of view to influence my feeling that way about that someone. This is a powerful insight that enables us to regain broader perspective in life and enhances our coping skills.

ECG reclaims the connectivity with the members and their caregivers by virtual means such as online meet, telephone follow-up with people with epilepsy (PwE), and organised conferences. Within permitted guidelines, we complemented it with physical home visits to follow up on PwE, and caregivers, and resumed our dragon boating activity. We are proud to announce that we were able to hold two epilepsy conferences, one a regional virtual congress, and the other a physical.

Let us move on, return and as a group, make the best of the new or altered normal with renewed strength and greater solidarity. For we have now come out of the dark pandemic as stronger survivals - more insightful, more resourceful and more creative.

Best wishes and warmest regards

DIANA KOH HWEE HOON
Vice-President
Dear Members and Friends,

Humans don’t trust differentness. There are a lot of different things that can make someone appear different. We are naturally averse to disease, an aversion to which we partly owe our survival. This translates into seeing signs of disease as bad. We gravitate to those who look fit and healthy; we shy away from those who don’t; those who might infect us.

We all have a hard time accepting differentness, but one thing that is often even harder to accept is a loved one with epilepsy. We don’t like the idea that bad things can happen to people we love. The unpredictability of seizures in people with epilepsy often makes us wonder when the next one will occur. Humans don’t like that kind of unpredictability. Order and control are safe. Unpredictability is potentially unsafe. Unpredictability is thus perceived as dangerous.

The stigma of epilepsy is a persistent and devastating bias. We keep our distance both socially and physically. This stigmatization of people with epilepsy can be considered a ‘second disease’. Because of the way that others treat them, people with epilepsy often also suffer from increased anxiety, stress and lower quality of life. Often the media and dramas delve into an incorrect depiction of people with epilepsy. Our biases and associations can be hard to shake.

The emotional and physical distance we keep from people with epilepsy is both unfounded and devastating for them. Most societies have come a long way from putting people with epilepsy into inhumane insane asylums, conducting exorcisms to rid them of their evil spirits, or subjecting them to public ridicule and abuse – but we are still a long way where diversity, equity and inclusiveness are valued.

The pandemic has forced us into living a digital life and virtual meetings that often lead to a flat experience; leaving behind the normal multisensory interaction we have with each other in real life that reminds us that people are fleshy, vulnerable and sensitive.

Approach different, do not fear a person with epilepsy. We fear that which we do not know. Take a chance next time, and sit next to that person with epilepsy when you volunteer, or have a meal with them.

Let’s recalibrate society’s relationship with epilepsy.

Stay safe, stay healthy, stay positive and take care of each other.

Thanks and blessings be to all of you, and more,

SHERMAN GOH KENG HWEE
Executive Director/Epilepsy Counsellor
MINUTES OF THE 26TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Minutes of the 26th Annual General Meeting held at Epilepsy Care Group (Singapore), 3779 Jalan Bukit Merah #02-03 Bukit Merah Community Hub Singapore 159462 and Virtual Zoom Meeting on Saturday, 28 August 2021.

Present:
Members’ Strength as at date of AGM - 146
Ordinary / Life Members required to form a quorum - 30
No. of Ordinary / Life Members present - 22

Members present:
Mr Ang Wei Jie
Mr Chan Wen Ting - (Virtual)
Mdm Josephine Chan Yoke Lan
Mr Cheong Jie Hui
Dr Choong Chew Thye
Mr Goh Keng Hwee
Ms Goi Ming Ying
Mr Allan Howe An Loon – (Virtual)
Mr Calvin Koh Chin Khoon
Ms Diana Koh Hwee Hoon
Mr Lee Soon Chua
Mdm Sharon Li Fui Ling
Dr Lim Kim Whee
Mr So Weng Fae
Mr Haydn Tan Hui Wen
Mr Tan Pek Ann
Mr Edward Tan Sen Liet
Mr David Tan Zheng Yuan
Mdm Teo Chui Mee – (Virtual)
Dr Harry Teoh Jian Hung – (Virtual)
Ms Joey Tseng Wee Wei – (Virtual)
Mr Calvin Schaffer Zhong

1.0 Commencement
1.1 As there were an insufficient number of members to reach the quorum required for the meeting, the members present formed the quorum, and as such the meeting was called to order at 1530 hrs. The meeting was chaired by the incumbent president, Dr Choong Chew Thye.

2.0 Outgoing President’s address
2.1 The outgoing president, Dr Choong Chew Thye presented her thanks to the 26th executive council, members, and volunteers for their support.

2.2 Dr Choong noted that this was the second time ECG is conducting a hybrid AGM. She expressed regrets that ECG was not able to allow more members to gather for this meeting as a result of the challenges posed by the ongoing developments of the pandemic. However, she was touched by the many who were present both physically and virtually.
MINUTES OF THE 26TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

2.3 Dr Choong shared that ECG’s current premise was tastefully decorated, and urged all to make good use of it.

2.4 Dr Choong also shared on some funding which would enable more participation in epilepsy trainings. She hopes that a younger group could join ECG, take on more important roles so as to create greater public awareness of epilepsy.

2.5 In closing, Dr Choong encouraged the members to leverage the various resources available at the new centre.

3.0 Confirmation of Minutes of ECG 25th Annual General Meeting held on 12 September 2020

3.1 To the “Attendance”, it was amended that Mr David Tan Zheng Yuan was present at the last AGM.

3.2 Dr Lim Kim Whee proposed to pass the minutes of the 25th Annual General Meeting held on 12 September 2020. Mr Cheong Jie Hui seconded the notion. The minutes of the 25th Annual General Meeting was thus passed with no further amendments.

4.0 Adoption of the Honorary Secretary’s Report

4.1 The Honorary Secretary, Mr Goh Keng Hwee, presented his report for the work year 2020/2021.

4.1.1 He was pleased to announce that ECG had passed the Ministry of Health compliance audit held from 9–10 November 2020.

4.1.2 On a sad note, Mr Goh notes the passing of two of ECG’s international friends, Judy Cochrane (Scotland) and Dr Rosemary Panelli (Australia). May they both rest in peace.

4.2 Subcommittee Reports
MINUTES OF THE 26TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

4.2.1 Dragon Boat Subcommittee
Captain of the dragon boat subcommittee, Mr Cheong Jie Hui reported that dragon boat activities were few in view of the unpredictable nature of the number of rising infections and the enforcement of various heightened alerts during the term. He looked forward for the resumption of water sports in the months ahead.

4.2.2 Editorial Subcommittee

(i) Editor of the editorial subcommittee, Mr Goh Keng Hwee presented the work of his subcommittee and informed the meeting that the cost of the annual report this year was $10. His subcommittee had bravely decided to produce the report in-house and send out to a printing firm for printing. Many thanks go to Mr Hayden Tan and Mr Lim Wei Xiang for their meticulous work in the creation of this annual report.

(ii) Mr Goh also shared that ECG continues to create its bimonthly newsletter, Epilepsy Link for circulation among the members. It had produced six issues during the term.

(iii) He called for volunteers who have a flair and keen interest in publishing to lend their time and expertise in this area. Mr Goh hopes for a Chinese version in the near future.

4.2.3 Fundraising Sub-Committee
Chairperson of the fundraising subcommittee, Mr Calvin Koh updated on ECG’s 18th annual Flag Day which was held virtually on 28 November 2020, upon the advice from NCSS. He informed the meeting that ECG’s 19th Flag Day for 2021 is scheduled to commence from 25 September to 24 December. He looked forward to the members’ support.

4.2.4 Human Resource Subcommittee
Chairperson of the human resource subcommittee, Dr Choong Chew Thye, reported no staff movement – Mr Goh Keng Keng remains as the only paid staff and thanked him for holding the fort. Dr Choong hopes that more volunteers would come forward to assist Mr Goh with his work, such as home visits, counselling, etc.

4.2.5 Information Technology Sub-Committee
Chairperson of the information technology subcommittee, Mr Chan Wen Ting reported on the initiatives done by his team over the past year. He will continue to work with the newly elected subcommittee and the SMU intern to redevelop ECG’s website.
MINUTES OF THE 26TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

4.2.6 Membership Development Sub-Committee
Chairman of the membership development subcommittee, Dr Lim Kim Whee, reported on the update of membership status.

4.2.7 Training & Education Sub-Committee

(i) Chairperson of the training and education subcommittee, Ms Diana Koh reported that her subcommittee continues to provide training and education, particularly, the EnAble support group meeting, which was well attended as many members were eager to return to share and listen to the sharing by others.

(ii) Ms Koh also reported that the educational component was also reflected in the three written letters to the Straits Times on epilepsy issues during her term.

(iii) Ms Diana Koh also reported that ECG members participated in a recent virtual Asian and Oceanian Epilepsy Congress (AOEC) as part of the IBE Epilepsy and Society Symposium on 13 June 2021. ECG’s executive director was one of the speakers for the AOEC. She further informed the meeting that there is an upcoming virtual three 2-hours session at the IBE Day on 1 Sep 2021 at 7pm.

(iv) On behalf of ECG, Ms Diana Koh congratulated Mr Ang Wei Jie for being presented with the IBE Golden Lights Awards in recognition of young people affected by epilepsy.

4.2.8 Welfare and Social Integration Sub-Committee
Welfare officer, Ms Goi Ming Ying updated on the activities organised by her subcommittee during the term.

4.2.9 She expressed regrets that her subcommittee was not able to follow through a virtual game due to low participation number. She hopes to hold another one soon and told the members to look out for it and encouraged them to join.

4.3 Mr David Tan proposed to adopt the Honorary Secretary’s Report and Dr Lim Kim Whee seconded the motion. The Honorary Secretary’s Report was thus adopted without any amendments.

5.0 Adoption of the Audited Financial Statements
(Full details: pages 25 to 53, Annual Report 2021)
MINUTES OF THE 26TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

5.1 The Honorary Treasurer, Mr David Tan Zheng Yuan, presented the audited financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2021.

5.2 Mr Tan informed the meeting that ECG had received an unqualified opinion from the auditor which means that the financial report is prepared in proper in accordance to the Singapore Financial Reporting Standard. There was a significant increase in the Plant and Equipment due to the renovation incurred in ECG’s new premises. There was also additional purchase of equipment to conduct possible activities. This also results in a significant decrease in the bank’s balance.

5.3 Though there was an increase in income from the last financial year, it is mainly due to the utilization of the grants. ECG should still be concerned in the donations received as it was lower than before. ECG should continue to look for new avenues or raising awareness to increase the donations needed to meet the running operating expenses.

5.4 It was resolved that the audited financial statements for the period 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021 be adopted as proposed by Mr Calvin Koh Chin Khoon and seconded by Mr Hayden Tan Hui Wen. The FY2020 ECG Audited Financial Statements were confirmed.

6.0 Election of the 27th Executive Council for the year 2021/2022

6.1 The Election Officer, Dr Lim Kim Whee, conducted the election of the 27th Executive Council and received the following nominations:

6.2 President: Dr Choong Chew Thye
Vice-President: Ms Diana Koh Hwee Hoon
Honorary Secretary: Mr Goh Keng Hwee
Asst Secretary: Mr Ang Wei Jie
Honorary Treasurer: Mr Lee Soon Chua
Asst Treasurer: Mr Tan Zheng Yuan
Welfare Officer: Ms Goi Ming Ying
Council Members:

Mr Koh Chin Khoon
Dr Teoh Jian Hung
Mr Cheong Jie Hui
Mr Hayden Tan Hui Wen
Mr Calvin Schaffer Zhong
MINUTES OF THE 26TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

6.3 As there was no contest for any of the positions, the Election Officer announced to the general meeting the elected members who would form the 27th Executive Council.

President: Dr Choong Chew Thye  
Vice-President: Ms Diana Koh Hwee Hoon  
Honorary Secretary: Mr Goh Keng Hwee  
Asst Secretary: Mr Ang Wei Jie  
Honorary Treasurer: Mr Lee Soon Chua  
Asst Treasurer: Mr Tan Zheng Yuan  
Welfare Officer: Ms Goi Ming Ying  
Council Members: Mr Calvin Koh Chin Khoon  
Dr Harry Teoh Jian Hung  
Mr Cheong Jie Hui  
Mr Hayden Tan Hui Wen  
Mr Calvin Schaffer Zhong

7.0 Appointment of Auditor

7.1 Mr Goh Keng Hwee sought approval from the general meeting to empower the 27th Executive Council to appoint an auditor for ECG.

7.2 As there was no objection, the 27th Executive Council is empowered to appoint an auditor for Epilepsy Care Group (Singapore) for the period up to the conclusion of the next Annual General Meeting of the Group, and the incoming Executive Council is authorized to fix the remuneration of the auditor.

8.0 Any Other Business

8.1 Mr Goh Keng Hwee informed the meeting that there were no written motions received under Article 27 of The Constitution of Epilepsy Care Group (Singapore). That being the case, the Annual General Meeting was called to a close at 1630 hrs.

8.2 A note of thanks was accorded to all present.

Recorded by: Ang Wei Jie  
Confirmed by: Goh Keng Hwee  
Assistant Secretary  
Honorary Secretary
SECRETARIES’ REPORT

Dear Members and Friends

Hope all is well with you and your loved ones!

Epilepsy Care Group (Singapore) (ECG) has been at the forefront of the pandemic in providing much needed support and services. We acknowledge and affirm the courage of our stalwart members, dedicated volunteers, and caring friends in persevering through this pandemic.

For too long, many of you have not been able to come down to ECG freely for activities because of the constraints imposed by the pandemic, and also because of fear for one’s own safety and health. We are aware of the burnout and stress during caregiving experienced by most of you over the last two years.

With the Covid-19 restrictions easing, ECG hopes to bring back the physical component to our activities so that members could reconnect and reignite. It is now relatively safe for us to come back together as one community.

The various subcommittees of the 27th executive council have started their programmes, such as dragon boating, gym workout, educational and social and recreational activities.

But for some of us, habits have already been formed. We are so used to attending virtual talks and activities in the comfort of our homes, that we do not see the need to physically come together as a community to reconnect with other members. However, we need to see and do things together as a community through our interaction with our fellow members in ECG. We need each other as we journey in our epilepsy struggles.

We must not allow fear to keep us away from coming back together as one epilepsy community. Thus, in view of the gradual return to normalcy, let us ‘Come Back to Go Forward’.

We hope to see all of you soon, and we know we can continue to count on you!

Stay safe and stay healthy everyone!

Till we meet again the next time round.....

THE 27TH EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

Executive Council members are elected at the annual general meeting. There is a term limit of one year for all including both the Honorary Treasurer and the Assistant Treasurer. All office-bearers may be re-elected to the same or related post for a consecutive term of office. Epilepsy Care Group (Singapore) held its 26th Annual General Meeting (Hybrid) on 28 August 2021. The following members were elected into office:

PRESIDENT
Dr Choong Chew Thye

VICE PRESIDENT
Diana Koh Hwee Hoon
SECRETARIES’ REPORT

HONORARY SECRETARY
Goh Keng Hwee

ASSISTANT SECRETARY
Ang Wei Jie

HONORARY TREASURER
Lee Soon Chua

ASSISTANT TREASURER
Tan Zheng Yuan

WELFARE OFFICER
Goi Ming Ying

COUNCIL MEMBERS
Cheong Jie Hui
Calvin Koh Chin Khoon
Hayden Tan Hui Wen
Dr Teoh Jian Hung
Calvin Schaffer Zhong

CONDUCT OF AFFAIRS
The Executive Council conducts its affairs as set out in The Constitution of Epilepsy Care Group (ECG) (Singapore) and the Group’s Financial Manual.

The Executive Council provides guidance to the Executive Director in overseeing the smooth day-to-day operations of ECG. The Executive Council also provides consultative, networking and resource support to ensure smooth service delivery, compliance with all relevant laws and regulations and sustainability of ECG.

DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST
Executive Council members avoid any position of conflict of interest in any transaction, project or matter relating to the Group and would make full and frank disclosure of any such potential conflict of interest to the Council immediately. If a Council member has any interest (directly or indirectly) in any transaction, project or matter relating to the Group to be discussed at any meeting, the Council member would:

(i) disclose the nature of his interest before the discussion or vote on the matter, and
(ii) withdraw from the meeting. The remaining Council shall then decide on this matter.

We confirm that each member of the Council and the Board of Consultants is not in a position where his personal interests may conflict with his role as a member of the Council or the Board of Consultants.

We also confirm that the paid executive management of ECG does not comprise more than one-third of the Executive Council nor chair its meeting. All Executive Council members (with the exception of the Honorary Secretary, who is also the Executive Director) are independent and do not receive any remuneration for the services to the Group.
## CODE OF GOVERNANCE – GOVERNANCE EVALUATION CHECKLIST
(1 April 2020 – 31 March 2022): Intermediate Tier

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code guideline</th>
<th>Code ID</th>
<th>Response</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>BOARD GOVERNANCE</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Induction and orientation are provided to incoming governing board members upon joining the Board.</td>
<td>1.1.2</td>
<td>Complied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are there governing board members holding staff appointments?</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff does not chair the Board and does not comprise more than one third of the Board.</td>
<td>1.1.3</td>
<td>Complied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are written job descriptions for the staff’s executive functions and operational duties, which are distinct from the staff’s Board role.</td>
<td>1.1.5</td>
<td>Complied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Treasurer of the charity (or any person holding an equivalent position in the charity, e.g., Finance Committee Chairman or a governing board member responsible for overseeing the finances of the charity) can only serve a maximum of 4 consecutive years. If the charity has not appointed any governing board member to oversee its finances, it will be presumed that the Chairman oversees the finances of the charity.</td>
<td>1.1.7</td>
<td>Complied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All governing board members must submit themselves for re-nomination and re-appointment, at least once every 3 years.</td>
<td>1.1.8</td>
<td>Complied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are documented terms of references for the Board and each of its committees.</td>
<td>1.2.1</td>
<td>Complied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CONFLICT OF INTEREST</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are documented procedures for governing board members and staff to declare actual or potential conflicts of interest to the Board at the earliest opportunity.</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>Complied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are documented terms of references for the Board and each of its committees.</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>Complied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>STRATEGIC PLANNING</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Board periodically reviews and approves the strategic plan for the charity to ensure that the charity’s activities are in line with the charity’s objectives.</td>
<td>3.2.2</td>
<td>Complied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>HUMAN RESOURCE AND VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Board approves documented human resource policies for staff.</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>Complied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is a documented Code of Conduct for governing board members, staff and volunteers (where applicable) which is approved by the Board.</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>Complied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are processes for regular supervision, appraisal and professional development of staff.</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>Complied</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# SECRETARIES’ REPORT

## FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND INTERNAL CONTROLS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Status</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>There is a documented policy to seek the Board's approval for any loans, donations, grants or financial assistance provide by the charity which are not part of the charity's core charitable programmes.</td>
<td>6.1.1</td>
<td>Complied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Board ensures that internal controls for financial matters in key areas are in place with documented procedures.</td>
<td>6.1.2</td>
<td>Complied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Board ensures that reviews on the charity’s internal controls, processes, key programmes and events are regularly conducted.</td>
<td>6.1.3</td>
<td>Complied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Board ensures that there is a process to identify, and regularly monitor and review the charity’s key risks.</td>
<td>6.1.4</td>
<td>Complied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Board approves an annual budget for the charity's plans and regularly monitors the charity’s expenditure.</td>
<td>6.2.1</td>
<td>Complied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the charity invest its reserves (e.g. in fixed deposits)?</td>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## FUNDRAISING PRACTICES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Did the charity receive cash donations (solicited or unsolicited) during the financial year?</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All collections received (solicited or unsolicited) are properly accounted for and promptly deposited by the charity.</td>
<td>7.2.2</td>
<td>Complied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did the charity receive donations in kind during the financial year?</td>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## DISCLOSURE AND TRANSPARENCY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The charity discloses in its annual report – (a) the number of Board meetings in the financial year; and (b) the attendance of every governing board member at those meetings.</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>Complied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are governing board members remunerated for their services to the Board?</td>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the charity employ paid staff?</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No staff is involved in setting his own remuneration.</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>Complied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The charity discloses in its annual report – (a) the total remuneration for each of its 3 highest paid staff who each has received remuneration (including remuneration received from the charity's subsidiaries) exceeding $100,000 during the financial year; and (b) whether any of the 3 highest paid staff also serves as a governing board member of the charity. The information relating to the remuneration of the staff must be presented in bands of $100,000. OR The charity discloses that none of its paid staff receives more than $100,000 each in annual remuneration.</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>Complied</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SECRETARIES’ REPORT

SUB-COMMITTEES
To assist the Executive Council in the execution of its duties, the Executive Council has delegated specific functions to various sub-committees. During the first Executive Council Meeting held on 18 September 2021, the following members were designated the following responsibilities:

Chair, Board of Consultants – Dr Lim Kim Whee
Chair, Dragon Boat Subcommittee – Cheong Jie Hui
Chair, Editorial Subcommittee – Goh Keng Hwee
Chair, Fundraising Subcommittee – Calvin Koh Chin Khoon
Chair, Human Resource Subcommittee – Dr Choong Chew Thye
Chair, Membership Development Subcommittee – Dr Lim Kim Whee
Chair, Training & Education Subcommittee – Diana Koh Hwee Hoon
Chair, Welfare & Social Integration Subcommittee – Goi Ming Ying
Chair, Information & Technology Subcommittee – Hayden Tan Hui Wen

International Bureau for Epilepsy (IBE): Sherman Goh (Singapore Representative)
IBE Teams:
Professional - Sherman Goh
Research - Diana Koh Hwee Hoon
Youth - Chris Ang

ECG BOARD OF CONSULTANTS
The Executive Council would like to express their gratitude to the following who were invited to serve as Honorary Consultants in their areas of specialization:

NEUROLOGY
Prof Michael Chee Wei Liang
Dr Lim Kim Whee

PSYCHIATRY
Dr Adrian Wang Chee Cheng

DENTISTRY
Dr Vijayan Loganathan

LEGAL
Anand Nalachandran
## EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEETINGS
The 27th Executive Council held five meetings during its tenure and more than half of its members must be present for proceedings to be valid. Besides briefing at meetings and email circulars, Executive Council members are encouraged to attend training programmes when necessary, to keep apprised of relevant new laws, regulations and changes in the charity landscape.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name/Position</th>
<th>Designation/Company</th>
<th>Date of Last Appointment as EC Member</th>
<th>EC member Since</th>
<th>Attendance at EC Meetings</th>
<th>Reasons for serving 10 years or more</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Choong Chew Thye (Dr) President</td>
<td>Senior Consultant Paediatric Neurologist/ KK Women’s &amp; Children’s Hospital</td>
<td>28.8.2021</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>5/5</td>
<td>Provides institutional knowledge and experience which contribute to organisation’s stability and continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Koh Hwee Hoon Diana Vice President</td>
<td>Principal Medical Social Worker/ National University Hospital</td>
<td>28.8.2021</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>5/5</td>
<td>Provides institutional knowledge and experience which contribute to organisation’s stability and continuity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goh Keng Hwee* Honorary Secretary</td>
<td>Executive Director/ Epilepsy Care Group</td>
<td>28.8.2021</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>5/5</td>
<td>One of ECG’s co-founding members and is instrumental to the Exco with his experience and insights in advancing ECG’s mission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ang Wei Jie Assistant Secretary</td>
<td>Financial Advisor/ NTUC Income</td>
<td>28.8.2021</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>4/5</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lee Soon Chua Honorary Treasurer</td>
<td>Chartered Accountant/ Hoon Tai Meng &amp; Co</td>
<td>28.8.2021</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>5/5</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Position</td>
<td>Appointment Start</td>
<td>Appointment End</td>
<td>Tenure</td>
<td>Notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tan Zheng Yuan</td>
<td>Assistant Treasurer</td>
<td>28.8.2021</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>5/5</td>
<td>The maximum term limit of Exco members holding the Honorary Treasurer and the Assistant Treasurer is a year. All office-bearers may be re-elected to the same or related post for a consecutive term of office.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goi Ming Ying</td>
<td>Welfare Officer</td>
<td>28.8.2021</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>5/5</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Koh Chin Khoon Calvin</td>
<td>Council Member</td>
<td>28.8.2021</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>4/5</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teoh Jian Hung (Dr)</td>
<td>Council Member</td>
<td>28.8.2021</td>
<td>2019</td>
<td>2/5</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheong Jie Hui</td>
<td>Council Member</td>
<td>28.8.2021</td>
<td>2019</td>
<td>3/5</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tan Hui Wen Hayden</td>
<td>Council Member</td>
<td>28.8.2021</td>
<td>2020</td>
<td>4/5</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zhong Calvin Schaffer</td>
<td>Council Member</td>
<td>28.8.2021</td>
<td>2021</td>
<td>2/5</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Board member holding staff appointment
IBE GENERAL ASSEMBLY
Mr Goh Keng Hwee and Mr Calvin Koh attended the IBE biennial General Assembly which took place on 3 September 2021. This meeting marked the formal end of the current term of office of the IBE Board and the start of the new term.

IBE EXTRAORDINARY MEETING
Mr Calvin Koh attended the Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) of the International Bureau for Epilepsy on 10 December 2021. The EGM discussed important activities that will dictate IBE’s future direction, including a systemic review of the IBE Strategic Plan.

YMCA-NUS BUSINESS SCHOOL VOLUNTEER SERVICE MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME
ECG sponsored Mr Calvin Koh Chin Khoon for the YMCA-NUS Business School Volunteer Service Management Programme from 2-30 October 2021. This is the first professional certificate course that builds the management capability of SSAs in Singapore as the needs of the sector grows and diversifies.

IN MEMORIAM
It was with great sadness that ECG announced the passing of Mr Hong Ming Hean (Life Member) on 19 February 2022.

Ming Hean joined ECG in 2003. He actively sourced for an external auditor for the Group. He was a qualified accountant and served as the Assistant Treasurer from 2006 to 2008. In 2007, he also helped start ECG dragon boat team, being an avid canoest himself. In March 2019, he wrote to terminate his Ordinary membership in view of his health. However, the Membership Development Subcommittee granted him Life membership in April 2019 after some deliberation. ECG last visited him at his home on 12 August 2021.

His warm personality and infectious laugh made him well-liked by fellow members of ECG. He will be sadly missed.

At this difficult time, ECG extends its sympathy to Ming Hean’s 87 year old mother and his brother, Ming Khim.

Before passing on, Ming Hean had expressed to his brother a sum as donation to the Group.

CONCLUSION
Lastly, Wei Jie and I would like to express our heartfelt appreciation to the Board of Consultants and our fellow members of the 27th Executive Council for contributing considerable time and effort during this challenging time, without which all the programmes and projects during our term would not have been possible. Our thanks also go out to the President’s Office, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Social & Family Development, the National Council of Social Service, the National Volunteer and Philanthropy Centre, all our sponsors and donors for their continuous support.

Goh Keng Hwee
Honorary Secretary

Ang Wei Jie
Assistant Secretary
SUBCOMMITTEES’ REPORTS

DRAGON BOAT SUBCOMMITTEE
Captain : Cheong Jie Hui
Coach : James Teo

Due to the uncertainty of the Covid-19 situation, members of ECG dragon boat team only managed to commence training on 13 February 2022 with a five-men crew. They also included land training at ECG gym on weekday evenings. The team was geared for its first race, The Century Race, on 6 March 2022, but had to withdraw as one of its team members contracted Covid-19. Now with an updated SMMs for sport and physical exercise/activity, the team looks forward to training with a 10-men crew on Saturdays, when possible.

EDITORIAL SUBCOMMITTEE
Editor : Goh Keng Hwee
Sub-editor : Hayden Tan
Artwork : Ang Wei Jie
Intern : Eileen Koh

In financial year 2021 to 2022, the editorial subcommittee produced a total of four newsletters and the annual report. The editorial subcommittee also designed publicity materials for the fundraising projects and the symposiums.

FUNDRAISING SUBCOMMITTEE
Chair : Calvin Koh Chin Khoon
Vice-Chair : Ang Wei Jie
Member : Lee Soon Chua, Tan Zheng Yuan

19th Flag Day
ECG’s 19th Flag Day was held from 25 September to 24 December 2021 digitally for the second year in view of the Covid-19 pandemic. We appreciate all the support and help rendered in this fundraising project. Special thanks to all our donors and Giving.Sg. We look forward to greater support again as we will be finally bringing back the physical Flag Day on 6 August 2022.

The total amount collected was $12,321.

Many thanks go to Mr Mohamed Masri Bin Khairuman, a caregiver to both his brother and son who have epilepsy. He helped raise funds $2,230 for this Flag Day by riding up and down Mount Faber to hit the same elevation as Mount Everest (8848m) on 1 January 2022.
FUNDRAISING SUBCOMMITTEE

50 Million Steps
The Fundraising subcommittee also organised a new initiative called the 50 Million Steps – a step for every person affected by epilepsy which ran from 1 January 2022 and ended on International Epilepsy Day on 14 February 2022. The walk aims to raise awareness, to improve visibility and increase understanding of epilepsy. It also helped raise $10,460 for ECG.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SUBCOMMITTEE

Chair : Hayden Tan
Vice-Chair : Calvin Koh Chin Khoon
Members : Goi Ming Ying, Cheong Jie Hui, Chan Wen Ting

The IT subcommittee set up a hybrid virtual–physical AGM on 28 August 2021. It also revamped ECG’s website. IT equipment were also purchased to enhance the digital transformation of the Group.

HUMAN RESOURCE SUBCOMMITTEE

Chair : Dr Choong Chew Thye
Vice-Chair : Dr Lim Kim Whee
Member : Diana Koh

The human resource subcommittee reported that in financial year as at 31 March 2022, ECG has only one paid staff.

MEMBERSHIP DEVELOPMENT SUBCOMMITTEE

Chair : Dr Lim Kim Whee
Vice-Chair : Dr Choong Chew Thye
Members : Diana Koh, Goh Keng Hwee

In the year under review, there were 144 members as at 31 May 2022. Adults with epilepsy make up for majority of the members. Other members include their caregivers and volunteers.

A breakdown of the membership into categories as at 31 May 2022 is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Life Membership</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ordinary Membership</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
EnAble
EnAble is an on-going support group held on the last Thursday of each month. It provides an atmosphere where members meet to share their experiences and learn from one another on how to care for people with epilepsy. It also provides them with an opportunity to render emotional and moral support to each other.

4th Asian Oceanian Congress of Neurorehabilitation (India)
ECG President, Dr Choong Chew Thye and Vice-President, Ms Diana Koh were invited as guest speakers at a virtual 4th Asian Oceanian Congress of Neurorehabilitation on 8 August 2021. Some members also attended this congress.

34th International Epilepsy Congress - IBE Day
Some members of ECG participated in the IBE Day which took place during the 34th International Epilepsy Congress on 1 September 2021. The three 2-hour virtual sessions consisted of 1) Making epilepsy a national health priority, 2) Empowering youth to raise their voices, and 3) Psychological treatment and self-management of epilepsy.

Living Well with Epilepsy Beyond the Pandemic 1
As part of ECG’s 28th Anniversary program, a symposium on ‘Living Well with Epilepsy Beyond the Pandemic’ was organised on 23 October 2021. This first-ever virtual meeting attracted 30 delegates from Africa, China, India, Malaysia, Malta, and Singapore; and offered an exciting opportunity to reach all the corners of the region and delivered an exceptional curriculum. (Full write-up from pages 26-27)

Living Well with Epilepsy Beyond the Pandemic 2
After two years of virtual meetings, ECG finally brought back the physical symposium on ‘Living Well with Epilepsy Beyond the Pandemic 2’ in conjunction with Purple Day on 26 March 2022 held at the National University of Singapore Society (NUSS). This unique program was enriched by experts in the field of neurology, pharmacology and psychology who shed light on the basic and different aspects of epilepsy care. In addition, this symposium also provided an excellent opportunity in hearing some heartfelt personal accounts from persons with epilepsy and their caregiver. This Purple Day Symposium also helped raise $775. (Full write-up from pages 28-29)
WELFARE & SOCIAL INTEGRATION SUBCOMMITTEE
Chair : Goi Ming Ying
Vice-Chair : Ang Wei Jie
Member : Calvin Schaffer Zhong

With the increasing number of Covid cases in 2021, and the constant changing of the Safe Management Measures (SMMs) by the government, the welfare and social integration subcommittee was unable to organise any activities for the members. Moreover, the members, being the vulnerable group, we have decided to be cautious to protect them from contracting the virus. However, the subcommittee had a busy term as it advised and helped members on Covid care management to those who had been infected by the virus.
At least 30 delegates from six different countries met virtually for a symposium on ‘Living Well with Epilepsy Beyond the Pandemic’ organized for persons with epilepsy, their families and caregivers on 23 October 2021.

The programme was organized by Epilepsy Care Group (Singapore) as part of the 28th Anniversary of the Group. This first-ever virtual meeting provided the platform for rich multi-cultural exchanges between Africa, China, India, Malaysia, Malta, and Singapore, forged by a common identity in coping and involvement with epilepsy.

The Symposium was chaired by ECG executive director Sherman Goh, and co-chaired by Hayden Tan who is also the IT Team Lead.

That afternoon’s welcome address was immediately followed by a series of presentations on a comprehensive range of topics that included:

- Epilepsy and the Family by Dr Choong Chew Thye
- Golden Light Awards sharing by Chris Ang Wei Jie
- Epilepsy and Lifestyle by Dr Harry Teoh
- Accept, Adapt and Dealing with Epilepsy by Goi Ming Ying
- Working Towards Resilience by Dr James Tan (Australia)
- 22 months and still Counting by Diana Koh
LIVING WELL WITH EPILEPSY.....
BEYOND THE PANDEMIC 1

One of the key factors to one’s ability in coping with epilepsy is strong family support, as strongly emphasized by neurologist Dr Choong Chew Thye in her presentation. Epilepsy affects family in many ways – unfounded concerns about the condition leads to negative attitude that include financial, employment, less likelihood of getting married, social isolation, and depression. Fear, isolation, secrecy, self-blame, and concealment strategies are therefore often used by persons with epilepsy and their families.

Dr Harry Teoh’s main message in his presentation was to drive home the point that normalcy is possible with a dose of common sense despite epilepsy and it should be an attainable goal for persons with epilepsy.

Coping with epilepsy as with other life-stage development, is life-long. Both Goi Ming Ying and Chris Ang Wei Jie shared on their struggles with epilepsy. Their struggles and coping with the condition gradually led to an incremental acceptance of the disease. Ming Ying and Chris were recipients of the International Bureau for Epilepsy ‘Outstanding Persons with Epilepsy’ Awards.

Our invited guest speaker, Dr James Tan, an organizational psychologist, shared four connections in building resilience, namely 1) building connections, 2) develop healthy thinking, 3) fostering wellness, and lastly 4) finding purpose.

Our final speaker, Diana Koh, spoke on the impact of the long pandemic on persons with epilepsy from studies in various parts of the world. From these lessons, she shared tips on coping during this ongoing pandemic. She also shared signs of COVID fatigue and draw common themes on impact on persons with epilepsy such as worries and afraid about contracting COVID-19, fear of hospitalization, stop or reduce medication, psychological distress.

And that was the end of what for all of us had been an intensely interesting symposium. We all agreed that appreciation was due to the organizing committee of the Epilepsy Care Group (Singapore) for the work they put into organising it, to the speakers for their willingness to share their expertise, and most of all to people with epilepsy who made it all possible.
Report on ECG Purple Day Symposium: Living Well with Epilepsy Beyond the Pandemic 2
By Diana Koh Hwee Hoon

Epilepsy Care Group held a physical symposium on ‘Living Well with Epilepsy Beyond the Pandemic 2’, in conjunction with Purple Day on 26 March 2022. It was a success and well attended by close to 30 members and caregivers. It was enriched by experts in the field of neurology, pharmacology, and psychology who shed light on the basic and different aspects of epilepsy care.

The Symposium started with a tribute to our well-liked and respectable late assistant treasurer Hong Ming Hean who passed on in Feb 2022, with a 1-minute silence.

ECG president Dr Choong Chew Thye opened the symposium with direction that ECG will continue to create sustainable activities that aim to provide a better understanding of epilepsy to maximize the knowledge and skills of all involved in epilepsy care.

Goi Mng Ying, ECG welfare officer, kick-started the symposium with sharing of the background of the International Epilepsy Day established in 2015, which is organised by International Bureau for Epilepsy and the International League Against Epilepsy. It provides a platform for people with epilepsy (PwE) to share their experiences and stories with a global audience. Ming Ying also shared about Purple Day being founded by a PwE, Cassidy Megan, in 2008. The purple colour comes from Lavender, the internationally recognised colour for epilepsy. It is held annually to increase awareness about epilepsy world-wide and dispel misconceptions about this neurological disease.

Dr Ho King Hee, a consultant neurologist, spoke on the topic on ‘Living with Epilepsy in the Workplace’. He took the audience through on the medical aspect of epilepsy, the possible symptoms, and what does one do during a seizure, and when to call for an ambulance. Dr Ho also touched on the treatment, and how does one help to avoid or reduce the incidence of seizures.

Sherman Goh Keng Hwee, executive director and epilepsy counsellor, shared the topic on ‘When the Well Runs Dry- Understanding Self-care’. He started with the definition of self-care and what it looks like. He then went on to talk about the benefits of self-care, and the how-to. He also described the types of self-care: physical, social, mental, spiritual, and emotional. To actualise it, one needs to develop a self-care plan: assess your needs, consider your stressors, devise self-care strategies, plan for challenges, take small steps, and schedule time to focus on your needs.
LIVING WELL WITH EPILEPSY......
BEYOND THE PANDEMIC 2

On the segment on ‘Living with Epilepsy’, two PwEs and a caregiver shared their journey and experience. Calvin Zhong shared about his journey with his condition, and how his life took a turn after he came to Epilepsy Care Group (ECG) and was assisted by the staff who helped him find a job. He grew and later challenged himself to take up higher responsibility in another workplace. Calvin also started to take control over his life, knew his trigger and avoided it.

Cecilia Baey chronicled her daughter’s journey of her condition from her school days and adjusted her expectations of her daughter along the way, on her work competence to social functional living, self-care, and recreational. They also attended ECG’s EnAble support group meetings and learnt about coping, and also attended talks and overseas symposiums for networking and continuing education on the ever evolving knowledge and treatment of epilepsy. They were intellectually and emotionally enriched and strengthened, and felt that they are now not alone in their struggles.

Calvin Koh came a long way. He came to Singapore and pursued a diploma and after which found work as a technician. He had seizures and sought treatment. His diagnosis and seizures affected his work and life. However, he turned this into an opportunity for growth by self-reflection and identified areas to rectify to improve, i.e. adhering to regular meals and breaks. With good self-management of his medical condition, his condition stabilised and he was eventually discharged. As part of his gratitude to ECG, he continued to attend ECG and eventually serve in the executive council.

The last speaker, Ivan Chew, a pharmacist by profession, spoke on ‘Your Medications and You.’ He shared about the clinical course of seizure and about who will benefit from medications. He shared that the goal of medication therapy is to get the right medication by establishing the cause and diagnosis. To maximise the benefit, one is to reduce the seizure frequency and manage side effects, and refer serious case promptly. Ivan suggested using a seizure diary to keep track of its frequency and identify triggers. He also touched on pregnancy and breast feeding, e.g. breast feeding is encouraged and sometimes need to be discussed with the doctor on changing medications or take it after breast feeding.
WHAT LIVING WELL WITH EPILEPSY MEANS TO ME...

I came to Singapore to pursue a diploma in 1992. After graduation, I joined a manufacturing firm as a production technician, fabricating glass to metal steel product. It was a new setup in Singapore. I was put on a rotating shift which caused disruption to my sleep patterns. I could not sleep well and had fainting episodes. I had a tonic-clonic seizure and was diagnosed with epilepsy in May 1996. I felt very down. I continued to have relapses and was sent to various hospitals in Singapore. On one occasion when I was in an ambulance, the medic asked, “Do you have any medical insurance to cover your stay in the hospital?” I was stunned. I have many times procrastinated to buy medical coverage. He then said, “Never mind, I will send you to a hospital that is not too expensive.” I was conveyed to Alexandra Hospital. I was told that the only specialist available there was a cardiologist. I was very glad to be discharged a few days later with follow-up at the Singapore General Hospital.

My life changed after the diagnosis. I was put aside at work because my employers knew that I could faint and cause problems at any point in time. I did a self-reflection as to why my health took a turn. Gradually, I realised that the condition offered me a useful “alarm system” to the state of my well-being, which I have chosen to ignore in the past. I learned for instance, to attend to my hunger and take breaks. I made an arrangement with the company in which I was working with to allow me to work only the day shifts. They acceded to my request. Upon discharge from the hospital, I was put under the care of Professor Michael Chee and subsequently joined the Epilepsy Care Group (ECG) in 1997. I then took the opportunity to confide in others my fears and frustrations. I also learned to share more about epilepsy and to dispel any misconceptions surrounding the condition.

After being on medication for two years, with proper care to my health such as getting enough rest, a good sleep pattern, exercise, and a regular healthy diet especially with home cooked food, my health got better. I was discharged from care in November 1999.

Epilepsy Care Group (Singapore) had provided tremendous support during the dark days of my life. I was determined to give back. So, I joined the ECG’s executive council in 2005 and have been with the council since then as the chairman of their Flag Day Committee.

I am now happily married and have a sixteen-year-old daughter. I am thankful that I have been able to live life to the fullest despite epilepsy. Fear and ignorance is not helpful for persons with epilepsy. I am grateful to my doctor, Epilepsy Care Group (Singapore), all my family members and friends who had helped me during my distressing period. I hope to inspire more Singaporeans, the public to better understand the condition and able to offer a helping hand, when possible.

Calvin Koh Chin Khoon
WHAT LIVING WELL WITH EPILEPSY MEANS TO ME...

Each time I told my friends and colleagues that I have epilepsy, the first thing they will ask is “When and how I got it”. I think all these questions are no longer important in this phase of my life. Life is always not a bed of roses. Having epilepsy is one of the challenges that I have to deal with. I am just one of the 50 million people worldwide, who suffer from this neurological disorder.

Growing up, I was always an easy target to make fun of. To me, this is part of growing up and it has made me stronger mentally. I have never been good with my studies. I did not do well in my GCE Normal Level exams and had limited choices to choose from in ITE. I chose mechatronics. However, I realised that persons with epilepsy (PwE) cannot handle machineries. As I have no other courses to choose from, I left school after that.

With only a normal level certificate and having epilepsy, looking for a job was not easy. During that time, I met Mr Goh from Epilepsy Care Group. He encouraged me and helped me look for a job. Through his referrals, I was able to get a job in Cheers. I was tasked to replenish stock and to arrange them on the shelves. I did have seizures while working in Cheers and I was grateful that my colleagues were always there to help me.

After five years of working in Cheers, I felt that I was ready for new challenges. So I left Cheers and my journey of looking for another job started. It was not easy looking for a job. A friend referred me to the Singapore Anglican Care Center and it was through them that I was able to get my current job in 7-Eleven. I was given a more challenging task as compared to just arranging stock and checking its expiry. I was assigned to be a cashier. To many of you, it might seem an easy task but it wasn’t for me. There were ‘what ifs’ that kept running through my mind. What if I have an epileptic attack and the cash register is left unattended, and money is stolen. Finally, after giving some thought, I decided to take up this challenge. I wanted to challenge all the fears that I had.

After being accepted in 7-Eleven, I started to take control over my life. I knew what the triggers for my seizure are sleep deprivation is one of them. I will sleep early the day before my shift. Having enough rest will definitely reduce the number of seizures. I cannot prevent a seizure from happening, but I can reduce it. I am happy that I have not had any seizure when I was doing my cashier duty for the past 2 years.

I am not seizure-free yet, but I would try my best to reduce the frequency of seizures. Life is a journey and is full of obstacles. For me, having epilepsy is just part of one.

Calvin Schaffer Zhong
WHAT LIVING WELL WITH EPILEPSY MEANS TO ME...

It all began with febrile fits in her infant years and continued on till completion of her primary school leaving examination that she excelled. I remember after each seizure in school, I had to carry her home piggyback. The competition and increasing stress in secondary school and polytechnic were real challenges and struggles for her. Nevertheless, she strived to complete her studies and made us proud of her. Unfortunately, society at that time was not able to understand her medical condition, so she drifted from jobs to jobs after graduation. Over the years, I noticed that her abilities to function have declined - her reactions are slow and there are mood swings.

Though I am disheartened, life has to move on. So I always remind myself to lower my expectations and help her learn and relearn the daily chores and social etiquette so as to prepare for a recharge once her condition stabilises. Whenever I have the time, I would encourage her to exercise with me - table tennis, badminton, cycling, and even the monthly dragon boating organised by Epilepsy Care Group (ECG) which I accompanied her to give her support. To my amazement, she picked up those new sports real fast! We also attended ECG’s EnAble support group meeting and learn about coping better, as well as a host of other activities, such as talks and overseas symposiums. All these enriched and strengthened us intellectually and emotionally, and we feel we are not alone in our struggles.

No life is actually smooth sailing, yet living with epilepsy is a test. Joey can’t foresee a seizure coming, but I help to ensure she is well prepared for it. Nowadays, she mostly has seizures in her sleep. After which, she would need some time to recover from the effects of nausea, loss of appetite and aches; then life bounces back again. This is what I would say to encourage my daughter, “You may not have all the 365 days to do all you wanted to achieve; but there is still enough time for you to fulfill your dreams, not forgetting that after each battle, you will emerge stronger. Despite how hard situations can be at times, you must be thankful and continue to face the future battles and tell yourself, ‘I have conquered you before and I will continue to defeat you because I am a fighter.’”

I am thankful to ECG for the support and counselling when I faced problems and had no one to turn to. This is a community to journey through with you in your struggles and render you help when you need it. You are not alone - ECG and all these friends here will stand by you. We are all in the same boat to fight the storms in our lives, and we are not discouraged because we are united with one heart and one mind to show society that we do not give up even when life tosses us a bad card.

Life is not without hope. Don’t ever give up!

Cecilia Baey Sok Huang
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MISSION STATEMENT

We seek to promote awareness, concerning epilepsy and to provide epilepsy related education and counselling to persons with epilepsy, their family members and to the public.

PHILOSOPHY

Persons with epilepsy should be treated as a group of persons who have an illness but who, for the most part can lead normal, productive and fulfilling lives. They should be able to say ‘I have epilepsy’ without being rejected or discriminated against.

OBJECTIVES

· To educate persons with epilepsy, their caregivers and the public about epilepsy.
· To provide opportunities and activities for meaningful social integration for persons with epilepsy and their caregivers.
· To advance the cause and interests of persons with epilepsy in Singapore.
· To provide social and emotional support for persons with epilepsy.

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