

SPEECH BY DR AMY KHOR, SENIOR MINISTER OF STATE FOR HEALTH AND THE ENVIRONMENT AND WATER RESOURCES AT THE ILTC QUALITY FESTIVAL 2015, WEDNESDAY, 14 OCTOBER 2015, 0900 HRS AT FURAMA RIVERFRONT

Dr Jennifer Lee, AIC Chairman

Dr Jason Cheah, AIC CEO

Distinguished guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

Introduction

1. Good morning. It gives me great pleasure to be at the 5th Intermediate and Long-Term Care (ILTC) Quality Festival organised by the Agency for Integrated Care (AIC).

Quality Care for an Ageing Population

2. As part of our Healthcare 2020 Masterplan, the Ministry of Health (MOH) is working hard to ready our healthcare system for the needs of our ageing population. We remain focused on developing a vibrant community care sector that will allow our seniors to age in place in a familiar environment. We have been rapidly building up capacity in the sector to make community care services more accessible to seniors. We are on track to achieve our targets of 17,000 nursing home beds, 10,000 home care places, 6,200 day care places and 6,000 palliative home care places by 2020.

3. Even as we enhance accessibility, we have also continued to make sure that our seniors receive quality care. We have made several steps in this regard, beginning with the nursing homes. In January 2014, we launched the finalised Enhanced Nursing Home Standards (ENHS) aimed at raising the quality of nursing home care across the sector. Since then, over 90% of nursing homes have worked with AIC to review their work processes to prepare for the enforcement of this standard come April next year. I am encouraged to hear that the nursing homes are doubling up their efforts to work on the areas for improvement.

4. We are also enhancing the quality of home care and centre-based care services. In April this year, we finalised the Home Care and Centre-based Care Guidelines which serve as references for providers to work towards delivering quality care in the home and centre settings. The Guidelines have been well-received. AIC has also produced Implementation Guides to help providers apply the Guidelines in their operations. We launched the Implementation Guides at the ILTC Manpower Development Awards earlier in August, and providers can look forward to receiving them next month. With the launch of the Implementation Guides, AIC will be developing training curriculums and capability building programmes for the home and centre-based service providers. We look forward to providers' participation in these programmes.

5. MOH and AIC will continue to work closely with, and support the sector in working towards the new standards and guidelines. Since 2014, the AIC Learning Institute has conducted close to 400 runs of training courses for the nursing homes. This is in addition to the training also provided by the Regional Health Systems

(RHS). With the help of these training courses, more nursing homes are establishing structured care and operational processes to provide better quality care for their residents.

6. Manpower development is also a key enabler for quality improvement. This year, the AIC Learning Institute launched the new Traineeship programme for Senior Care Associates, Healthcare Assistants and Therapy Aides, to train up Singaporeans in eldercare to work in this sunrise sector. Apart from training and capability development programmes, we have also set aside funding to encourage providers to undertake quality improvement efforts. Providers with quality improvement ideas can apply for funding under the Tote Board Community Healthcare Fund (TBCHF) and the Healthcare Productivity Fund - ILTC (HPF-ILTC) to support them in bringing in new technology and models of care. Overall, these measures will help raise the standards of care in the sector.

A Vibrant Quality Improvement Culture

7. These efforts need to be supported by a strong culture of quality improvement within the sector and each organisation. Events like today bring together healthcare professionals from various organisations to showcase their quality improvement initiatives and share best practices. This is important to inspire and promote a culture of continuous quality improvement. For the scientific poster competition this year, AIC received more than 130 submissions from 29 organisations, more than double the participation from when the Quality Festival started in 2012! This is a strong sign that more organisations and care professionals are embracing the quality improvement culture.

8. I would like to highlight two examples which have led to better care for our seniors. At Sunshine Welfare Action Mission (SWAMI Home), a team of nurses, physiotherapists and social workers developed a set of indicators to monitor how well their residents were being cared for in the areas of serving of meals and transfers. Through specific interventions by the management, such as holding discussions with care staff, screening videos and conducting training sessions, they were able to observe a 20% improvement in all indicators of care interactions with their residents in these areas.

9. At the National Kidney Foundation (NKF), a group of nurses initiated and led support groups which focused on the psychosocial needs of new patients. The nurses learnt from medical social workers about patients' psychosocial issues and applied them in befriending new patients, drawing them into support groups and monitoring their ability to cope. Thanks to their efforts, the patients' ability to adjust to the new dialysis centre environment and cope with end-stage renal disease increased by about 58%. There are many more commendable projects which serve as inspiration and useful references for the rest of the sector.

Translating Vision into Action

10. A quality improvement culture needs to go beyond talk, and be translated into action. This year's festival has adopted the theme of "Translating Vision to Action" and AIC has lined up several experienced and distinguished speakers to share with us their insights and methodologies for implementing quality improvements.

11. AIC has also compiled some quality improvement methodologies into a Quality Improvement Toolkit handbook, which I am pleased to launch today. You can find this handbook in your welcome packs. We hope that you will find the resources and tools documented in the handbook useful in helping you implement your quality improvement projects. We would also like to encourage providers to participate in the Quality Improvement Toolkit interactive workshops conducted by the AIC Learning Institute to learn more about the tools in the handbook. Almost 200 participants have participated in these workshops since they started in 2012. AIC has also recently expanded the workshops to cover care in a centre-based setting and is customising the training for home care and nursing homes for roll out next year.

Conclusion

12. I am heartened to see quality improvement taking root in the sector. This is important to delivering quality care to our seniors so that they can age gracefully and with dignity. We have made good progress in enhancing the quality of care, and MOH and AIC remain committed to supporting the sector in this journey.

13. In closing, I would like to wish all of you a fruitful time at this year's ILTC Quality Festival, and I look forward to seeing more of your quality improvement visions translated to action. Thank you.