

9th July 2010

Media Release

S\$1.2 million Training Fund to Upgrade Skills of Healthcare Professionals in the Intermediate and Long-Term Care (ILTC) Sector

Health Manpower Development Programme – Intermediate and Long-Term Care (HMDP-ILTC) to provide 100% funding for skills upgrading in Gerontology and Geriatrics, Palliative Care, Mental Health and Psycho-Geriatrics and Medical-Surgery Nursing

1 Healthcare professionals of ILTC service providers like community hospitals and nursing homes can look forward to a substantial annual training fund to boost their capabilities. The fund, given through the Health Manpower Development Programme – Intermediate and Long-Term Care (HMDP-ILTC) has S\$1.2M this financial year to start with.

2 Provided by Ministry of Health (MOH) since 2002, the fund is administered by Agency for Integrated Care (AIC) with effect from last year. It supports advanced skills training in elderly and continuing care. HMDP-ILTC aims to develop manpower capabilities of the ILTC sector in order to improve the quality as well as the range of services in Singapore. The ILTC sector, comprising community hospitals, nursing homes, hospice care providers, day rehabilitation centres and home care providers, forms an integral segment of Singapore's healthcare delivery system.

3 HMDP-ILTC consists of two schemes and has two funding calls a year. The fellowship scheme provides training funds to support individual applicants for training conducted either locally or overseas. The visiting experts scheme enables an expert to be invited to Singapore to conduct training. This round, four overseas experts in continuing care will be imparting their skills through knowledge sharing.

4 AIC has identified four training areas of priority for the ILTC sector to meet the emerging needs of our ageing population. Such training, whether conducted locally or overseas, will receive 100% funding support:

- Gerontology and Geriatrics;
- Palliative Care;
- Mental Health and Psycho-Geriatrics; and
- Medical-Surgery Nursing.

5 Today, HMDP-ILTC awards were handed out to 48 recipients in a ceremony by Guest-of-Honour, Mr Hawazi Daipi, Senior Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Health & Ministry of Manpower. Among the list of recipients were staff nurses, therapists and physicians from a range of ILTC institutions.

6 Reflecting on her learning experience, 2009 award recipient Asmah Binte Salleh, a Staff Nurse at Thong Teck Home for Senior Citizens, said, "The fund provided me with a great opportunity to sharpen my skills and knowledge and gain new perspectives on palliative care. Thanks to the course, I am now also better able to mentor my colleagues in ensuring that we provide our patients optimum quality of care."

7 Besides the four key disciplines, ILTC employees can also tap on HMDP-ILTC for up to 75% of the costs of skills upgrading in other disciplines. Participants can attend conferences and short courses, enrol in graduate diploma or postgraduate degree programmes, as well as for attachments to overseas healthcare/ILTC facilities.

8 Dr Jason Cheah, Chief Executive Officer of AIC said, "We are excited by the great potential of HMDP-ILTC in supporting manpower development of the ILTC sector. This is especially so given the fact that many voluntary welfare organisations tend to operate on tight resources. We are heartened at the high level of interest in this fund as it means that like us, many of our VWO partners believe in the importance of continuous learning and advancement."

9 AIC will continue to partner ILTC institutions to harness the fund to upgrade the skills of their workforce, to deliver better care for their clients. In fact, the second funding call of HMDP-ILTC is currently open till 23 July 2010 and AIC looks forward to many more applications.

10 For more information on the application process, please go to www.aic-learn.sg or contact Ms Kate Wu of AIC. (kate.wu@aic.sg, DID: 6603 6874)

Note: Intermediate and Long-Term Care (ILTC) is also commonly known as step-down care

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About the Agency for Integrated Care (AIC)

Agency for Integrated Care (AIC) was formed as an independent corporate entity under Ministry of Health Holdings (MOHH) in 2009 to look into the enhancement and integration of Intermediate and Long-Term Care (ILTC) sector. Our mission is to achieve the best health outcomes for our patients by empowering our patients and care givers, enabling our stakeholders, and strengthening the links between family physicians, specialists, nurses, applied health and other healthcare professionals to enhance coordination and integration of care. We strive for working with partners and stakeholders in the healthcare continuum to drive the development of a patient-centric and integrated care model.