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Joint Media Release

For Immediate Release

**Pilot Programme brings positive improvements in
Medication Management for participating nursing homes**

The Pharmaceutical Care Programme (PCP), piloted last year by the Pharmaceutical Society of Singapore (PSS) and the Agency for Integrated Care (AIC), has resulted in positive outcomes for the nursing homes (NH) who had participated. Under the programme, PSS and AIC had sought to help expand the network of available pharmacists to support and assist the nursing homes. These pharmacists were also called upon to review residents' medication, especially residents who required multiple medicines. The Voluntary Welfare Organisation (VWO) nursing homes included St. Theresa's Home, Society for the Aged Sick, Tai Pei Social Service, Sree Narayana Mission Home for the Aged Sick, Jamiyah Nursing Home and Moral Home for the Aged Sick.

2. A key outcome of the pilot was the training programme developed by PSS pharmacists for the nursing homes' staff to expand their knowledge in safe medication and drug knowledge thereby enhancing patient care. Through the training conducted, nursing home staff deepened their knowledge about drug use in geriatric conditions, how to administer the appropriate medication, and also gained a greater understanding of the latest drug-related information such as prescription terminology, suitable drug

storage and good record-keeping practices. To date, the AIC Learning Institute (LI) together with PSS has facilitated two training sessions, the first in November 2011, followed by the second in February 2012. A total of 50 nurses and healthcare assistants have attended the training. Two more runs of the training will be conducted this year, including one in October.

3. For the pilot programme, pharmacists from Guardian Health & Beauty, Watson's Personal Care Stores Pte Ltd, NTUC Unity Healthcare and National Healthcare Group Pharmacy have been providing their expertise as a medication resource expert to the nursing homes. They assisted in reviewing residents' medication, the nursing homes' processes for medication administration, and medication management. Recommendations to strengthen the standards and systems for safe pharmaceutical care were recommended by the pharmacists. One example is the implementation of an audit tool. The audit tool enabled care staff to ensure that their residents receive all the medications they are required to receive, at the appropriate dose and at the right time. This has assisted nursing homes to have in place, a systematic process to minimise the opportunity for drug interactions and duplications when managing residents' medications.

4. Ms Cheryl Char, Pharmacist for National Healthcare Group Pharmacy said, "Being able to contribute as a pharmacist under PCP at a nursing home has been a fulfilling experience for me. To be able to use my knowledge to enhance the medication management process and knowing that the residents are better taken care of is very rewarding."

5. Through the effective management of residents' medication needs and equipping of nursing homes staff with relevant skills, the quality of patient care in participating nursing homes were also raised. Besides the knowledge transfer from pharmacists to care staff, these staff have been able to tap on the pharmacists as a resource and helpline for drug information, thereby enhancing the care delivered to residents.

6. Sister Goh Liang Kim, Nurse Manager of Tai Pei Social Service said, “It has been good to have a professional come in to help guide our medication administration and improve our care for residents. I would strongly encourage other homes to take up this challenge!”

7. PCP complements other quality improvement initiatives of AIC for nursing homes such as the Multi-dose Medication Distribution System which aims to reduce medication errors, enhance the medication administration practices and procedures to help nurses save time from packing of medications.

8. On the success of the pilot programme, Ms Christine Teng, President of PSS said, “PSS is extremely pleased to be able to collaborate with AIC on the Pharmaceutical Care Programme. We are thankful for the participating nursing homes who have taken part in the pilot programme with us. Together, their active involvement in the programme have been able to show positive results. We look forward to serving and partnering more nursing homes to empower and enable them in medication management to bring about better patient care for nursing home residents.”

9. Dr Jason Cheah, Chief Executive Officer of AIC said, “I applaud the participating nursing homes for their ongoing efforts to enhance patient care. Their commitment to training through PCP is an important step to further raising the level of professional care they provide to patients. I am grateful to PSS and the community pharmacists for their time and their contributions, in particular, to share, advise and help build up the capabilities and standards of the nursing homes in managing their patients’ medication needs more effectively. I believe such joint collaborations on knowledge exchange and sharing of best practices will go a long way in transforming the community healthcare sector. We will continue to collaborate with PSS to expand the programme to more nursing homes in order to achieve best health outcomes for the patients.”

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About the Agency for Integrated Care (AIC)

The Agency for Integrated Care (AIC) is set up by the Ministry of Health (MOH) to oversee, coordinate and facilitate all efforts in care integration. Our mission is to achieve best health outcomes for our patients by empowering clients and coordinating access to appropriate care, enabling stakeholders to strengthen the primary care, intermediate and long-term care and community mental health sectors, and enhancing collaboration to create a well-connected healthcare system. For more information, please visit www.aic.sg.

About Pharmaceutical Society of Singapore (PSS)

The Pharmaceutical Society of Singapore (PSS) is a non-profit organisation representing pharmacists in Singapore. Founded in 1905 as the Straits Pharmaceutical Society, today it is steered by an elected council comprising a president and 11 council members. The society aims to maximize the contribution of pharmacists to the healthcare of Singapore residents. This is done by working with various stake holders to provide our patients and public with high quality pharmaceutical services with emphasis on safe, efficacious and cost effective drug treatments. In addition, the society advocates health promotion and healthy lifestyle through disease prevention and responsible self-care/self-medication. As the professional body for pharmacists, it also

runs a comprehensive year-long continuing education programme where all members are strongly encouraged to participate and keep themselves updated professionally. For more information, please visit www.pss.org.sg.