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SPEECH POINTS BY MR THARMAN SHAMUGARATNAM, DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER FOR FINANCE & ADVISOR TO JURONG GRC GROs, AT THE CHAS FAMILY CARNIVAL ON 19 JAN 2014, SUNDAY AT 10AM AT TAMAN JURONG COMMUNITY CLUB

1. Thank residents for coming to the Family Carnival jointly organised by Agency for Integrated Care (AIC) and Taman Jurong Constituency.
2. Today we usher in the Lunar New Year, and at the same time express our respects to our senior residents for their contributions to their families and to Singapore. I hope all of you will continue to enjoy good health and happiness, and that all of us will enjoy the love of our families and friends.
3. Two of our senior residents here today are over 100 years old. They are Mdm Koh Lee and Mdm Chua Yok Chim. Let us all show our special respect and admiration for Mdm Koh and Mdm Chua!
4. Today's carnival also comes exactly two years after we started "CHAS" (Community Health Assist Scheme) in Jan 2012.
5. Besides distributing Hong Baos to our seniors, I am also happy to be presenting Health Assist cards later to residents who recently qualified for CHAS after we expanded the qualification criteria.

From Hospitals to Community to Home: Our “Whole-of-Singapore” Healthcare Support

6. Let me assure all our seniors: you will get more help and support for your healthcare needs and costs. The Government will provide you more help. In the community too, near to your homes, you will get more care.

7. **From the hospitals to community-care and to home-care, you will get more care, and care you can afford. Both lower-income and middle-income families will get affordable care, through the government’s support.** Let me say a bit more about this.

8. Hospitals: We are expanding our public hospitals.

- In Jurong, our new General Hospital in Jurong East (Ng Teng Fong General Hospital) will open at the end of this year.
- Jurong Community Hospital will open next year.
- Westpoint Hospital, the community hospital in Taman Jurong itself, is also making plans to expand.

9. Outpatient services: We will be increasing subsidies at specialist outpatient clinics for lower- and middle-income patients.

10. Within the community, closer to home:

- CHAS enables lower and middle income Singaporeans to get subsidies not just in our polyclinics, but also in GP clinics and dental clinics in every constituency.
 - I am sure many of you already have the Health Assist Cards under this scheme - the Blue cards for lower income Singaporeans and Orange cards for middle-income.
 - I am glad that 4 GPs and 1 dental clinic in Taman Jurong are already participating in CHAS.
- The CHAS subsidies cover not just common illnesses such as flu, but also chronic illnesses such as diabetes and hypertension. Many patients have found it a good alternative to going to the polyclinic, because it is convenient and near the home.
- For those who have not applied for CHAS or who would like to find out more, there is an AIC booth at the Carnival, where we will help you.
- We are also strengthening care through our VWOs which are themselves supported by the Government:
 - In the Jurong locality: We will be getting a new NKF dialysis centre in Jurong West. Currently we have three dialysis centres in Jurong West and Bukit Batok, but they are already

at full capacity. NKF will build a new dialysis centre, which will be a welcome addition.

- In Taman Jurong, we now have two centres run by VWOs to meet the needs of seniors - NTUC SilverACE and the Thye Hua Kwan Senior Services Centre. The two centres have also become informal gathering places where friends and neighbours meet up.
- Plus we are making it easier for you in your home:
 - We are helping you with safety improvements inside the home, like grab bars, non-slip flooring in bathrooms and ramps for wheelchairs. (This is our EASE scheme.)
 - We are also subsidizing needy seniors for many healthcare devices. Besides things like wheelchairs, we have included more devices like hospital beds that can be used at home, and also daily items like diapers.
 - Plus we are now developing home nursing, where a nurse will visit you at home.
- We are doing all this **so that you can stay active and also be looked after close to home, or in your home itself, close to your family members and friends in the neighbourhood.**

- But it is not just the Government and community organisations like our VWOs who are supporting our elderly. Our residents themselves and other individual volunteers play a very important role on the community.
 - We are quite fortunate that in Singapore, family values remain strong and most of our seniors are taken care of by their children or family members.
 - However, there are those who are single or do not have children. Our volunteers In Taman Jurong will reach out to every elderly persons in need of support or friendship.
- We have many more young people volunteering. But we also find more of the seniors also being happy to volunteer, to help other seniors. This is wonderful. If any one of you want to join us and do a bit of volunteering in the neighbourhood, please let the CC or your RC know.
- So to all our elderly residents, let me say: **No one will go lonely in Taman Jurong. And anyone who needs help will find help coming.** Our volunteers will reach out to every resident in need of help, and make sure everyone has friends in the community.

CHAS Enhancements

11. As I mentioned, CHAS is a major initiative to provide affordable healthcare near the home.

12. At the start of this year, we have expanded the coverage of CHAS subsidies, in the following ways:

- CHAS is now open to Singaporeans of all ages. This means that young children and younger adults can also receive government subsidies when they visit a participating CHAS GP or dentist.
- CHAS is also open to more middle-income families, besides those with lower incomes.¹
- More chronic conditions are also now covered, bringing the total number to 15, like chronic problems with our knees and other joints.²
- CHAS members above 40 years old now enjoy subsidies for recommended health screening for conditions such as diabetes, high blood pressure and high cholesterol. (Just bring your Health Promotion Board invitation letter for screenings, which you will receive at regular intervals.)

13. The Government will continue to look at how we can enhance CHAS to cover a wider range of conditions and treatments.

¹ The household monthly income per person criterion has been raised from \$1,500 to \$1,800. For households with no income, we have relaxed the Annual Value (AV) assessment criterion to \$21,000 and below, which covers all HDB flats and some lower-value private residences.

² The five new conditions are osteoarthritis, which refers to degenerative joint diseases, enlargement of the prostate gland, anxiety, Parkinson's disease, and chronic kidney disease.

14. Ever since we launched CHAS in January 2012, the number of beneficiaries has increased to about 520,000 today.

15. I want to thank our grassroots leaders and volunteers all over the island who have together with AIC reached out to households eligible for CHAS – to inform them of the benefits and how to apply. AIC will continue its outreach efforts to schools, and workplaces and through road shows, events, and a publicity campaign to encourage more eligible Singaporeans to sign up.

16. I'm happy to share also that there are now over 600 GP clinics and 370 dental clinics on CHAS island-wide – this is close **to half of all GP and dental clinics in Singapore**. CHAS doctors can become your family doctor, who will help you with your health over the years.

17. I hope to see more clinics all over the island displaying the CHAS sticker to serve Singaporeans who live in every locality better.

Conclusion

18. Please join in all the festivities arranged for you today. I wish everyone a Happy Chinese New Year and a very satisfying year for you and your family members!