



MINISTRY OF HEALTH
SINGAPORE

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Speech by Minister-of-State for Health Dr Amy Khor at the Intermediate and Long-Term Care (ILTC) Nutrition Month Celebration 2012, Wednesday 28 March 2012, 10.45am at Republic Polytechnic

Distinguished guests,

Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen. It gives me great pleasure to be here to inaugurate the first Intermediate and Long-Term Care (ILTC) Nutrition Month Celebration with all of you.

Introduction

2 Singaporeans are known for their love and appreciation of food. I am sure the same can be said of our patients receiving care in healthcare institutions. In fact, good nutrition, food and eating habits are crucial to the convalescence and quality of life of patients, especially those receiving a longer period of care in intermediate and long-term care facilities. .

Enhancing the nutritional care in ILTC sector

3 The Ministry of Health is committed to capability building in the ILTC sector to improve both organisational effectiveness and patient care. The inaugural ILTC Nutrition Movement, spearheaded by the Agency for Integrated Care (AIC), is a timely addition. For a start, this year's initiatives are targeted at nursing homes, with



Ministry of Health, Singapore
College of Medicine Building
16 College Road
Singapore 169854
TEL (65) 6325 9220
FAX (65) 6224 1677
WEB www.moh.gov.sg

a potential outreach of more than 9,600 nursing home residents across the island, when scaled up.

4 As part of the ILTC Nutrition Movement, AIC is rolling out a series of initiatives to improve the quality of nutrition and food services in nursing homes. Let me briefly elaborate on three key initiatives.

5 First, understanding patients' dietary needs and identifying areas where nutritional quality could be enhanced in nursing homes. AIC, in collaboration with three nursing homes, conducted patient focus group discussions to gather feedback and come up with a new screening tool to identify patients at risk of under nutrition as well as those with difficulty swallowing. The preliminary results from these screenings showed that it is useful in identifying and facilitating timely intervention to the patients' diet to improve patients' overall wellbeing. AIC will continue to refine and validate the tool so that it can be rolled out to more nursing homes.

6 Second, AIC is introducing a range of courses to educate care staff on nutrition and food services to improve quality of care for nursing homes residents. The courses range from culinary skills training to food service and clinical nutrition training under the HMDP-ILTC Visiting Expert programme. I am told that close to 400 ILTC healthcare professionals from 39 organisations have benefited from these training sessions.

7 Third, through the ILTC Nutrition Movement, AIC also aims to promote awareness and encourage closer monitoring of nutrition value in nursing homes. For a start, AIC will be publishing an ILTC cookbook titled "Cooking for Health", which is a first of its kind in Singapore. The cookbook contains 20 recipes developed by AIC and students from Singapore Polytechnic aimed at increasing variety, food presentation and improving the nutritional intake of nursing home residents. It also features personal contributions from three of our local celebrity chefs – Chef Devagi Sanmugam, Chef Eric Teo and Chef Sam Leong.



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ILTC NUTRITION MONTH CELEBRATION 2012

8 As part of the ILTC Nutrition month long celebration this year, a total of 24 nursing home cooks went through a two-day culinary skills training under the expertise of celebrity Chef Eric Teo and the culinary team from Republic Polytechnic to enhance their skills in food preparation and services. Some of the nursing home cooks also shared with me that they have since gained a better understanding of the nutritional value and will apply the new knowledge and skills when preparing food for their residents in future.

9 I am happy to learn that the nursing home cooks from Villa Francis for the Aged who participated in the culinary service training programme, have incorporated the new dishes that they had learnt into their daily menus at the nursing homes. A poll among the patients revealed that the steamed spinach custard was the most popular dish. I also hear that the cooks from Econ Nursing Home modified the Fried Rice recipe that they learnt during the training, to suit residents' preferences. The dish was very well received and has even become a regular feature in the nursing home's menu!

10 Today, our nursing home cooks will be showcasing their cooking and presentation techniques that they have picked up from the course. I am looking forward to tasting some of the culinary delights served later. The ILTC Nutrition Movement is also in line with the Health Promotion Board's dietary recommendations and ongoing efforts to promote good nutrition among Singapore residents, including the elderly.

11 It is truly heartening to witness the experts of various fields coming together today, to work and collaborate to enhance the nutritional status of our nursing home residents. At this point, I would like to commend the nursing home participants for their continuous pursuit of knowledge and skills upgrading; a culture we would like to continue to grow within the healthcare family.



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Closing

12 Let me also thank all partners for your dedication and commitment to enhance the capabilities of our ILTC providers. To our local celebrity chefs, students from Singapore Polytechnic and the culinary team at the School of Hospitality from Republic Polytechnic, thank you for enthusiastically stepping forward to collaborate with AIC in today's event for our nursing home residents.

13 I believe AIC will continue to identify and facilitate more industry-wide improvements and win-win partnerships between the nursing homes and the community to achieve our shared goal of enhancing nutritional care in the ILTC sector. Such partnerships will enable us to achieve better health outcomes for our elderly.

14 Thank you and I look forward to more such collaborations.

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