



MINISTRY OF HEALTH
SINGAPORE

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**Opening Address by A/P Muhammad Faishal Ibrahim, Parliamentary Secretary
for Health and Transport,
at the ILTC Quality Festival, 6 Sept 2013**

Dr Jennifer Lee, Chairman, Agency for Integrated Care

Distinguished guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

Introduction

1. Good morning. I am happy to join you today at the Agency for Integrated Care's (AIC) ILTC Quality Festival 2013. This is the third time that the Quality Festival is being held. This shows the ILTC sector's continued focus on quality. It is also the first time our social service providers, including NTUC Eldercare and St Luke's Eldercare, are participating in this conference. Let us warmly welcome them.

2. The integration of health and social aged care under AIC is an example of how we continue to look for ways to improve the quality of ILTC care. Looking at the conference programme, there are many other Quality Improvement tools and experiences that are worth learning from. I would like to thank AIC for bringing the ILTC sector together to exchange ideas and inspire one another.



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Quality: A Way of Life

3. The ILTC sector will play an increasingly important role in caring for our rapidly ageing population. On our part, the Government has been increasing capacity across the sector, be it in nursing homes, senior care centres, or home care services.

4. But even as we build capacity, we must remember that quality is equally if not more important. Many of us have spouses, parents or grandparents who are seniors, and we would want them to be cared for in a way that is safe and gives them a good quality of life. To achieve this, quality cannot be an afterthought. Quality must be internalised within the ILTC sector, such that we live and breathe quality as a part of our daily work habits and practices.

5. This year's theme is "Quality: A Way of Life". After we "sparked a culture of change"¹ last year, let us now work to make quality "a way of life" for the ILTC sector. I see signs that this is taking root. For this year's Poster Competition, AIC received a total of 55 abstracts from 22 organisations, with 12 organisations presenting their Quality Improvement initiatives for the first time. These reflect the blossoming culture of safety and quality within the ILTC sector and I would like to suggest three areas where the sector can continue to focus on for quality aged care.

¹ Parl Sec was the GOH and gave the opening address at the ILTC Quality Festival 2012, with the theme "Quality: Sparking a Culture of Change".



Developing quality manpower

6. First, we need to continue developing quality manpower. Good healthcare staff are the bedrock of quality patient care, and have the ability to improve care outcomes and make a difference in our seniors' quality of life.

7. The ILTC sector needs to attract and retain quality manpower - people with not only the clinical competence but also the passion and sense of innovation to make a difference. The government will continue to support the sector in doing so, through funding for training initiatives, as well as salary increases for clinical, administrative, and support staff in VWO ILTC organisations. We are also working to improve career pathways and to build capability. You will be glad to note that the AIC Learning Institute has identified over 100 training programmes that will help providers improve their quality, including new programmes for advance care planning, dignity of care, and falls prevention. We hope that you will use these to further enhance skills and expertise across the sector.

8. Furthermore, AIC will be introducing the first ever ILTC Excellence Awards in 2014, which will recognise exemplary staff and excellent care practices in the areas of clinical care, service quality, innovation, and productivity. All ILTC organisations will be eligible and are welcome to take part in this celebration of the sector's successes. We hope that these awards will be able to spur the sector to push itself to reach higher standards of patient care.



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Enhancing standards

9. Secondly, we need to continue enhancing standards. We want to work in partnership with the ILTC sector to articulate standards of care that a patient can expect in each setting. These standards bring greater consistency of care within the sector and provide a foundation from which we can aspire towards better practices.

10. Some of you have been putting in time and effort in an industry-led workgroup to draft enhanced nursing home standards. To help nursing homes better understand and meet these standards, AIC has been developing a 'Guide to the Enhanced Nursing Home Standards'. Representatives from all nursing homes will be invited to provide feedback on this guide in October. I encourage the nursing home operators to participate actively so that together, we can develop a practical and relevant guide that will have clear positive health and social outcomes for our seniors. We look forward to your continued support as we roll out the standards.

Integrating care across sectors

11. Thirdly, we need to strengthen our ability to provide integrated care. Good aged care must be person-centric such that our seniors' needs are met across the care settings and whether the needs fall within the health or social sectors. The integration of health and social aged care under AIC is a step in the right direction.

12. At the same time, we are building up the Regional Health System (RHS) in terms of both infrastructure and service delivery models. Within this network of public, private, and VVO partners, patients will be able to transition more seamlessly



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between different care settings. Collaborations to integrate care are already producing some positive results, such as the pilot interim caregiver scheme which started between Changi General Hospital and Thye Hua Kwan Moral Charities. Instead of staying in the hospital to wait for more permanent care arrangements, this scheme will allow patients to recuperate in the comfort of their own home. As of last month, 79 CGH patients have benefited from this caregiving service pilot, and we expect that more patients will benefit from this as we expand the scheme to other hospitals. I urge you to establish networks and complement each other's good work, such that quality integrated care is the norm rather than the exception.

Closing

13. The Quality Festival is an important platform to bring the sector together to share, to learn, and to inspire one another. There is a place for Quality Improvement in every organisation, be it developing quality manpower, enhancing standards, or integrating care. I am sure that the well-curated programme and the distinguished speakers at this conference will help you to continue embracing quality as a 'way of life'.

14. On that note, I wish you a fruitful conference ahead. Thank you.



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