



MINISTRY OF HEALTH  
SINGAPORE

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**Speech by Parliamentary Secretary for Health A/Prof Muhammad Faishal  
Ibrahim at the ILTC Quality Festival, Friday 9 November 2012, 9am at Furama  
Riverfront Singapore**

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Dr Jason Cheah, CEO, Agency for Integrated Care

Distinguished guests

Ladies and gentlemen

Good morning.

2 It gives me great pleasure to join you today at the Agency for Integrated Care's 2nd ILTC Quality Festival 2012. This annual Quality Festival is a platform for the intermediate and long term care (ILTC) sector to come together, to showcase their Quality Improvement (QI) initiatives, learn and inspire each other, and discover ways to build a strong culture of quality improvement, so as to promote patient safety.

3 I am delighted to see so many distinguished speakers, guests, friends and participants with us this morning. I heard from the organiser that this year's conference was oversubscribed by 40%. Today's excellent attendance reflects the growing interest in quality improvement, and with good reason. The ILTC sector is growing in importance in light of our ageing population and their evolving needs. The public's expectation for quality care and patient safety is also increasing and rightly so.



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## Quality: Sparking a Culture of Change

4 The theme for this year's Quality Festival is "Quality: Sparking a Culture of Change". To me, I look upon the ILTC organisations which have embraced Quality Improvement as part of their culture as "sparks", as these institutions will spark a culture of change in the sector.

5 I am heartened that many of you in the ILTC sector have already proactively embarked on Quality Improvement initiatives with positive health outcomes for your patients and residents. These Quality Improvement projects include improving hand hygiene practice, prevention of pressure ulcers, improving care delivery, among other areas.

6 Take the example of Hand Hygiene, a cornerstone of good infection control practice. It was first introduced as a Quality Improvement theme in August 2010.

7 The aim was to enhance existing practices using World Health Organisation (WHO)'s recommendations - to consistently perform hand hygiene when delivering care to our patients and residents, to inculcate continuous learning and sustain the practice with their respective organisations.

8 To-date, 15 ILTC organisations have embarked on implementing a hand hygiene programme. This is an encouraging start and we hope that more organisations will soon join us in the programme or start a programme on their own. Care staff have not only attended training but have even developed their own programmes to create awareness and educate peers, management, residents and patients about the importance of hand hygiene. More alcohol hand-rubs points-of-care have been installed within their premises and hand hygiene practices are closely monitored to ensure compliance. These may appear, at a glance, to be simple steps but they have resulted in good outcomes - reduced risk of infection for not only patients/residents but also care staff, reduced care costs because of lower



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risk of infections and overall improvement to care standards. This is especially important in the ILTC sector, as we care for seniors who may be more frail and susceptible.

9 The Hand Hygiene ‘movement’ has really gathered momentum, judging from the wonderfully creative responses AIC received when it ran its “Hand Hygiene Educational Video Contest” a few months ago.

10 AIC has since collaborated with the video contest winners to create an educational training video showcasing the “Moments of Hand Hygiene” and the “7 Steps of Good Hand Hygiene Technique”. This video is the first of its kind for the sector and features different ILTC staff. It is also available in various languages -- English, Mandarin, Tamil, Malay, Burmese and Tagalog to aid in the in-house training of the ILTC sector’s diverse workforce. All ILTC organisations will soon be given a copy of this training resource, which I am sure will augment your existing training programmes and create a positive impact across the sector.

### **Inaugural Scientific Poster Competition for the ILTC sector**

11 There is also no let-up in the other areas of the sector’s Quality Improvement efforts. To showcase these and the learning made by staff, this year’s Quality Festival includes the inaugural Scientific Poster Competition. AIC has received a total of 57 abstracts from 15 organisations which is a very good start.

12 Among the posters received, I would like to share with you one project by All Saints’ Home – “Improving Enteral Feeding Care and Processes”. For this project, several measures were implemented, including training the staff to observe residents with swallowing difficulties; applying consistent and evidence-based practices during administration of enteral feeding to prevent aspiration pneumonia; and considering alternative feeding methods – such as partial oral feeding or fully oral diet for residents who were previously on nasogastric tubes.



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13 This is but one of the many examples of good Quality Improvement initiatives that are now in place in the ILTC sector and I encourage all of you here to continue to fan this 'SPARK' for Quality.

## Closing

14 There is a place for Quality Improvement in every organisation, and I hope that more will come on board for this journey. If each and every one of us here today, together with our organisations embraces Quality Improvement as part of our organisational culture, I am confident that in time to come, these 'sparks' will together ignite and blaze an enduring culture of change that will better benefit patients, residents, staff and caregivers. These commendable bottom-up Quality Improvement initiatives complement my Ministry's quality improvement and regulatory framework. I encourage all care providers to embrace quality improvement, and take charge of putting such a culture into practice, so that patients can benefit from your efforts directly and consistently.

15 I wish all of you a meaningful and productive time at this year's Quality Festival and I hope you will also take time to strengthen existing bonds and make new friends.

16 Thank you.



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