



MINISTRY OF HEALTH
SINGAPORE

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**SPEECH BY DR AMY KHOR, SENIOR MINISTER OF STATE (HEALTH),
AT THE LAUNCH OF TEMASEK CARES – TECHNOLOGY-ASSISTED
REHABILITATION IN THE COMMUNITY (TC-TRiC),
AWWA READYCARE CENTRE, ON 25 OCT 2013, 2.55 PM**

Mr Richard Magnus,
Chairman, Temasek Cares

Mr Lim Peng Hun,
Deputy Principal, Singapore Polytechnic

Mr Tim Oei,
Chief Executive Officer,
Asian Women's Welfare Association

Dr Jason Cheah,
Chief Executive Officer, Agency for Integrated Care

Ladies and gentlemen,

Introduction

Good afternoon.



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2. I am pleased to be here with you at AWWA Readycare Centre for the launch of the Temasek Cares – Technology-assisted Rehabilitation in the Community (TC-TRiC) programme.

3. This is a timely programme as Singapore grapples with the challenges arising from a rapidly ageing population over the next two decades. The number of seniors above 65 years old will increase threefold to reach 900,000 in 2030. This will lead to an increase in the number of seniors with healthcare needs. We need to urgently ramp up the development of aged care facilities and services to ensure that our seniors are well looked after.

4. However, we face several challenges in building up our aged care capabilities. Our elderly population is growing at a faster rate than our younger population. It is therefore difficult to find sufficient manpower to support the increase in capacity needed to take care of our seniors.



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In addition, as we seek to level up the quality of care for our seniors despite our manpower constraints, we also need to be mindful that we need to continue keeping our cost of care affordable.

5. We need to transform the way we deliver care to overcome these challenges. Technology is a key enabler which will allow us to do this. It is a game-changer that will allow us to scale up services and provide better care to seniors while reducing the manpower required. This is especially relevant in the area of community rehabilitation services where therapist resources are scarce.

Technology and its Role in Enhancing the Aged Care Sector

6. It is heartening to see multiple parties coming together under the TC-TRiC programme to develop technological solutions that can improve the quality of rehabilitative care. I understand that Singapore Polytechnic has been using technology to improve rehabilitation for the disabled and aged communities since 1993. Its work has benefitted many and I am glad to see the school continuing its good work in this area through this programme.



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7. It is also remarkable that the programme is already bearing fruit with the four equipment that are being showcased today. The Bilateral Limb Manipulator, Floor Projection System, Augmented Reality Games for Therapy and Computer-based Cognitive Training are all examples of game-changers which will help us better support the needs of an ageing population in the following areas.

8. First, these equipment address the current manpower constraint by increasing manpower productivity. Therapists can use the equipment to conduct programmes in groups instead of one-to-one, but with similar positive rehabilitative outcomes.

In addition, therapists can allow some patients to use the equipment independently while they attend to other patients with more severe needs.

9. Second, these equipment increase patient motivation and encourage patients to complete their rehabilitation programmes. The equipment allow rehabilitation programmes to be customised to the needs of each individual patient, resulting in more targeted care outcomes.



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Rehabilitation is also made more fun and interesting through the use of visual and interactive technology. This motivates patients to continue their rehabilitation programme and spurs them to make progress towards their recovery process.

10. Third, these equipment measure rehabilitation outcomes more efficiently as they can automatically document the patients' progress and clinical outcomes. This is an improvement over the current method where the therapists have to measure the outcomes manually which may not be sufficiently accurate or precise.

Conclusion

11. Even though technology is important, we must also not forget the softer aspects of caring for our seniors. In this regard, I would like to commend the students from Singapore Polytechnic who are involved in this project. Their involvement reflects the intrinsic care and concern that our young Singaporeans show for our seniors.



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This is priceless and worth deepening. I hope to see more Post-Secondary Education Institutions (PSEIs) taking part in such programmes to pioneer more innovative ideas to bring a better and more enabling life for our seniors.

12. On this note, I would like to thank all partners and commend your efforts to share, collaborate and develop innovative approaches to rehabilitation care. You have all set an example for the rest of the Intermediate and Long-Term Care (ILTC) sector to replicate and I hope that more ILTC service providers can embrace technology to improve their aged care capabilities.

Thank you.



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