



MINISTRY OF HEALTH  
SINGAPORE

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**SPEECH BY MINISTER FOR HEALTH, MR GAN KIM YONG, AT THE CHAS FAMILY  
CARNIVAL ON 14 MAY 2017, 9.45AM, AT BEDOK TOWN SQUARE**

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Dr Wong Kirk Chuan, Deputy CEO, Agency for Integrated Care  
Advisors, Grassroots volunteers and residents of Bedok  
Distinguished Community Care partners  
Ladies and Gentlemen

Good morning.

1. I am pleased to join you here at the annual CHAS Family Carnival, organised by the Agency for Integrated Care (AIC). I hope you are having a good time with your family and friends, enjoying the various activities.

**How CHAS has benefitted Singaporeans and brought care nearer to home**

2. Started in 2012, the Community Health Assist Scheme, known as CHAS, also known as the Blue card and Orange card, plays an important role in making subsidised primary care more accessible to Singaporeans.

3. With CHAS, lower to- middle-income Singaporeans and Pioneers can receive subsidised healthcare at participating GP clinics near their homes. Today, there are about 1.3 million Singaporeans who can benefit from CHAS, including our Pioneers, compared to just 34,000 when we started in 2012. Last year, 685,000 Singaporeans received a total of \$169 million in CHAS subsidies. There are about 1,650 CHAS GP and dental clinics



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islandwide, with close to 100 in East Coast and Fengshan. 97 per cent of CHAS and PG cardholders islandwide have access to more than one CHAS clinic within a kilometre of their homes. This makes it convenient for PG and CHAS cardholders to receive subsidised care.

4. Over the years, we have enhanced the scheme to benefit more Singaporeans. For example, in 2014, we expanded the scheme to cover eligible Singaporeans of all ages by removing the age criteria, as well as our Pioneers. We also progressively increased the number of chronic conditions covered under CHAS to a total of 19 today.

5. We have also taken steps to improve the transparency of clinic charges and CHAS subsidies. If you visited a CHAS clinic this year, you might have noticed that your receipts now contain an itemised breakdown of the treatment fees and subsidies received. We have also provided our CHAS partners with an updated set of guidelines on claims criteria. We hope that such improvements will help to make clinic charges and CHAS subsidies clearer to patients as well as doctors.

### **GPs as your Trusted Health Partner**

6. Family doctors are our key partners in healthcare. I would like to thank our CHAS partners for working with us to provide subsidised care to Singaporeans.

7. With in-depth knowledge of their patients' medical and family history, family doctors are better placed to provide holistic care. Take, for example, Ms Lee Yee Theng, an CHAS Orange cardholder staying in Bedok South. She and her family visit Dr Michael Wong for their medical care. Over the years, Dr Wong has built a trusting relationship with the family. He would remind the family when their next health screenings were due. During a visit five years ago, Ms Lee shared with Dr Wong her concerns about high blood pressure, given her family history. As a result of that conversation, she went for screening



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and was diagnosed with high blood pressure early. Dr Wong has since been helping Ms Lee manage her condition with lifestyle changes, together with medication and regular follow-ups. CHAS subsidies have helped lower the cost of Ms Lee's quarterly visits to Dr Wong.

### **Better supporting chronic disease management in the community**

8. Ms Lee benefits from having one GP take care of her medical needs. Her story is an example of how our GPs play an important role in chronic disease management. The Government will continue to support GPs in caring for our people.

9. For example, we are scaling up our efforts to help GPs re-organise into Primary Care Networks, so that they are better equipped to provide chronic care. The Government will provide funding support for nursing services and other resources to enable these Primary Care Networks to better manage their patients' chronic conditions. Earlier this year, we also announced that the Health Promotion Board's Screen-for-Life Programme will be enhanced from 1 September this year to make health screenings even more affordable and convenient. From August, eligible Singaporeans will receive a letter from HPB inviting them to schedule a visit with any CHAS GP clinic to screen for diabetes, high blood pressure, high blood lipids, as well as cervical and colorectal cancers. This will be done over a period of time.

10. With the enhanced subsidies, health screening will be free for Pioneers, while CHAS cardholders and other eligible Singaporeans will need to pay only \$2 and \$5 respectively. The fee covers not only the basic health screening, but also the first post-screening consultation with a doctor, if required. CHAS cardholders and Pioneers diagnosed with chronic conditions can tap on CHAS subsidies subsequently to manage their conditions at their CHAS clinics.



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## Taking personal ownership of health

11. While the government will continue to work with our primary care partners to provide accessible, affordable and quality healthcare for all, each of us have a part to play as well. As individuals, we can adopt a healthy lifestyle through healthy eating and exercising regularly. In addition, we should go for regular health screenings.

## Conclusion

12. I encourage everyone here who does not yet have a regular GP to find one close to your home. For those of you who have not signed up for CHAS, I encourage you to find out more about the scheme and check on your eligibility at the CHAS booth later. For existing CHAS cardholders and Pioneers, do make full use of the CHAS benefits for your outpatient care and stay healthy.

13. Thank you and I wish you all an enjoyable day at the CHAS Family Carnival.



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