



MINISTRY OF HEALTH
SINGAPORE

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**SPEECH BY DR AMY KHOR, SENIOR MINISTER OF STATE FOR HEALTH,
AT THE OPENING CEREMONY OF COMMUNITY CARE FORUM 2015, AT THE
GRAND COPTHORNE WATERFRONT HOTEL, ON 15 MAY 2015**

Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good Morning. I am happy to join you, bright and early, at this Community Care Forum 2015.

2. This forum is very timely. Faced with a rapidly ageing population, we need to step up our efforts now, to build a robust and comprehensive home and community care system, to support seniors to age in place. This Forum will allow us to share ideas and experiences in the provision of good community care. It is a valuable opportunity for us to learn from one another, as well as from the best practices overseas, to make home and community care services even better for our seniors here.

Accessible Quality Care that is Affordable

3. **The development of Home and Community Care services is a top priority for the Ministry of Health. We have invested in expanding the capacity of home care and centre-based care and will continue to do so.** By 2020, we will increase home care places by some 50% to 10,000 places and double the number of day care places at our centres to 6,200 places.

4. **But achieving quality care is just as, if not more, critical than expanding capacity.** Working with providers in the sector, we have established new home and



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centre-based guidelines to define good care in the home and community care settings. The Agency for Integrated Care (AIC) will be working with the sector to build capability and work towards improving the level of care provided to patients whether at home or in day centres.

5. **We must also continue to spur new models of care and push the boundaries of what we can do to care better for our seniors. For this, we need new ideas.** In this regard, I am happy to announce that Tote Board has committed a fresh sum of some \$100million under the Community Healthcare Fund. This includes funding for new pilots to test bed innovative care models, whether in preventive health services or in aged care.

6. The Community Healthcare Fund has also enabled voluntary welfare organisations to develop and scale up their care services. For instance, the Fund supported Handicaps Welfare Association to develop and start a comprehensive range of home care services, including home medical, home nursing and home therapy services. The Fund also supported Yong En Care Centre to develop and expand its nurse-led model of home care services, to serve the residents in Chinatown.

ILTC Manpower and Capability Development

7. **Ultimately, the most critical factor to achieve good quality care is good people delivering the care.** We need good people with good hearts and deep skills, to help us expand community care, as well as bring our quality of care to the next level.

8. The community care sector is a sunrise sector that offers many good job opportunities for Singaporeans who wish to pursue a meaningful career, be it as Senior Care Associates looking after the elderly in the centres, Therapy Aides working with seniors on their rehabilitation, or Healthcare Assistants who care for the daily needs of residents in a nursing home. There are diverse roles, and individuals can decide which role suits them based on their strengths and interests.



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9. **This year, the Agency for Integrated Care will launch a major effort to attract Singaporeans, of all ages, to work in the home and community care sector. This is part of our efforts to grow a strong local core of workers for the sector.** AIC will put in place a holistic set of programmes to interest, recruit and retain new staff for the sector.

10. First, Singaporeans interested in a career in the sector can look forward to a 'Community Care Discovery Programme'. This is a series of "learning journeys and job trials" to which Singaporeans can sign on to get a feel of what it is like working in the sector. They can spend three days with a community care provider and receive an allowance while doing so. The stint is meant to allow participants to better appreciate how care is provided to the seniors and the different support care roles within the community care team.

11. Second, AIC will bring jobs to the door steps of Singaporeans. Throughout this year, a series of recruitment fairs in different regions of Singapore – North, West, Central and East – will be organised to showcase the different job opportunities in home and community care, in each of these regions. The first recruitment fair will be at Nee Soon Central later this month. We want to send this message to all Singaporeans – you can find a meaningful career in home and community care, near where you live.

12. Third, AIC will introduce a new traineeship programme to give Singaporeans new skills to enter the sector. Singaporeans can sign up to be trained as Senior Care Associates, Health Attendants and Therapy aides. The traineeship programme is open to both in-service healthcare workers as well as those who are not currently employed in the sector. Whether you are a former caregiver who is keen to pursue caregiving as a vocation after your experience looking after a loved one, or you are new to the sector without any formal qualification in healthcare, we will provide you the necessary training to enter a meaningful career in this sector. During the five-week training, trainees will also receive an allowance as well as a \$200 bonus when they complete the training.



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13. Finally, to retain good staff, Singaporeans who join the sector from 1 June this year as a community support care staff can receive a bonus which is equivalent to an additional month of their basic salary, at the end of their first year of employment.

14. We will also continue to expand training opportunities to develop deep skills and to support career progression within this sector. In addition to existing programmes, such as ITE certificate courses and the Professional Conversion Programmes to enable mid careers to be trained as nurses or therapists, the Singapore Institute of Technology (SIT) will be starting degree programmes in allied health sciences to train young people who want to join the healthcare sector.

Conclusion

15. In conclusion, the home and community care sector is set to grow. It will be a sector offering meaningful and skilled jobs for Singaporeans, and Singaporeans can work at locations near their homes. I hope that more Singaporeans will join us in this meaningful effort to co-create a supportive and vibrant care community and to make this truly a city for all ages.

Thank you.



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