



MINISTRY OF HEALTH
SINGAPORE

SPEECH BY DR AMY KHOR, SENIOR MINISTER OF STATE, MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND MINISTRY OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND WATER RESOURCES, AT WORLD BLOOD DONOR DAY 2019, 29 JUNE 2019, 10:00AM AT DOWNTOWN EAST

Mr Tee Tua Ba, Chairman, Singapore Red Cross

Mr Benjamin William, Secretary General and CEO, Singapore Red Cross

Champion Blood Donors

Ladies and Gentlemen

1. Good morning. I am happy to join you at this year's World Blood Donor Day celebrations.
2. Today, we recognise the contributions of more than 73,000 blood donors who donated blood in 2018, including about 1,700 of you who achieved key donation milestones. We would also like to acknowledge the 35 blood-mobile organisers who rallied their organisations and communities to give blood through numerous blood donation drives last year.
3. It is your steadfast dedication that has helped more than 29,000 patients receive life-saving blood transfusions each year. So, before I go further, family and friends please join me in expressing our gratitude for their contributions.

Active Ageing with a Purpose

4. As champion donors and blood-mobile organisers, all of you share a passion for saving lives – one that involves taking time out from your busy schedules to visit a blood bank regularly, and committing yourselves to giving blood over a period of several years, sometimes even decades.
5. Indeed, I have been told that one in four of the champion donors whom we are recognising today is above 55 years old. It speaks volumes of your commitment and passion for saving lives. Even as you have transitioned through the different stages of your lives, your altruism has not diminished.
6. More importantly, blood donors like yourselves reflect what we are striving for in promoting an active ageing lifestyle – one that encourages good health, gracious living, and a desire to improve the lives of those around them. You represent purposeful and active ageing at its best. One donor who exemplifies this is Mr Robert Chew, who has donated blood 184 times over the past 51 years. Mr Chew is 70 this

year, and a lifelong donor. His steadfast dedication in giving blood while advocating passionately for our National Blood Programme is admirable.

Convenience for Donors

7. To make it more convenient for donors like Mr Chew to donate regularly, the Health Sciences Authority (HSA) and the Singapore Red Cross are setting up satellite blood donation centres around the island to bring them closer to where donors live, work or study. The approach has been successful, as the three satellite centres opened so far have contributed half of our national blood supply for patients in Singapore. Moving forward, a fourth satellite centre will be set up at the new Punggol Town Hub by 2022 to ensure blood supply sufficiency. In the interim, bi-monthly mobile drives have begun at Sengkang General Hospital in May this year so that residents of Punggol and Sengkang can start blood donation during this period. I am pleased to share that the response to the inaugural blood drive was very encouraging, which would augur well for the new blood bank at Punggol Town Hub. With the new site, we hope to better support the growing community of repeat donors and inspire the next generation to make a difference, and save lives.

Blood Donation Across Generations

8. We need young donors to step up and make their first donation, and for them to eventually join the ranks of Champion Blood Donors. Educating our youth on the value of their donations will ensure that blood will always be available to patients who need it. Mr Nathan, a retired school principal and former blood donor, is doing exactly that. At a spritely 64, he hosts educational tours at the blood bank to students almost every week, sharing his own blood donation experience and advocating the importance of helping patients who need blood to survive.

9. I would like you to take a moment to recall how you first started your donation journey: perhaps you accompanied your parent, a friend, or colleague to the blood bank when they gave blood. Or perhaps some of you had a figure like Mr Nathan in your life – someone who inspired you through his story. I encourage you to share your motivations with those around you, and invite them to join the lifesaving cause. For building a sustainable national blood supply, means building passionate communities of Champion Blood Donors behind it.

Thanks to Donors for the Continued Support

10. So, this ceremony is dedicated to each and every one of you who have shown steadfast dedication to donate your blood. Your contributions have continued to make our national blood supply available, and more importantly, giving this precious gift of life to countless Singaporeans. It is my honour today, to join you in commemorating your unwavering dedication: to patients, to each other, and to future blood donors.

11. Champions, thank you for putting the lives of your community, as your priority.

12. I wish you all a happy World Blood Donor Day.