



MEDIA RELEASE

Blood Donors Lauded for Life-saving Contributions at Annual Appreciation Ceremony

- 73,280 gave blood in 2018 for more than 29,000 patients who needed blood transfusion
- Senior Minister of State, Ministry of the Environment and Water Resources & Ministry of Health, Dr Amy Khor, commends efforts of dedicated donors; highlights blood donation as part of an active lifestyle
- Launch of fourth satellite blood collection centre in 2022

The Singapore Red Cross (SRC) and the Health Sciences Authority (HSA) today honoured the achievements of 1,690 blood donors and community partners at the 16th World Blood Donor Day and Champion Blood Donor Recognition Ceremony. Held at Downtown East, the annual appreciation event saw Guest of Honour Dr Amy Khor, Senior Minister of State, Ministry of the Environment and Water Resources & Ministry of Health, presenting awards to donors who made their 50th to 200th blood donations last year. Special guest, Ms Cheng Li Hui, Member of Parliament for Tampines GRC, presented awards to donors who had made between 25 and 50 blood donations in a ceremony in the afternoon.

2 21 champion blood donors received the Medal for Life¹ award - the highest honour reserved for blood donors who have made more than 200 donations. They were part of the 1,655 champion blood donors who were honoured for their milestone donations². The annual ceremony also recognised some 35 corporate and community blood-mobile organisers (BMOs) for their invaluable contributions in growing the blood donor pool in Singapore.

3 Last year, 73,280 donors contributed almost 116,000 units of blood, enabling more than 29,000 patients to receive life-saving blood transfusion. One such beneficiary is Ms Serene Lee, who received 15 bags of blood products during her heart transplant surgery in 2015. Said Ms Lee, "While waiting for a heart transplant, I was part of a patient support group. Fast forward a few years later, I am still and will always be a part of the patient support group, but with a new me and a new heart. Today, I'm able to walk the wards and take care of my fellow patients. This has only

¹ The Medal for Life award is presented to male and female donors who have made 200 and 150 blood donations respectively.

² Each year, blood donors are recognised for having given their 25th to 200th donations.

been made possible with the precious gift of life that my organ and blood donors have given to me. Thanks to them, I will continue to walk the wards for as long as my heart beats.”

4 Emphasising the importance of sustaining the nation’s blood supply, Mr Tee Tua Ba, Chairman, Singapore Red Cross, remarked, “There are thousands of patients like Serene, whose lives depend on the assurance of a safe and sufficient blood supply each and every single day. It is only with a ready stock of blood that they can undergo essential medical treatments without delay.”

Blood donation and active ageing

5 Each day, an estimated 400 units of blood are needed to sustain the national blood stock - this translates to 15 units of blood needed every hour. As Singapore continues to grapple with the challenges of an ageing population, the need for blood will continue to grow.

6 To some donors, their age has not deterred them from stepping forward to give blood. Most strikingly, among the champion donors from 2018, one in four is aged 55 and above. Lauding the efforts of these donors during her speech, Dr Khor highlighted the importance of seniors keeping active, citing giving blood as one of the means where they could contribute to the community. She also stressed the importance of engaging the youth continuously to promote regular blood donation. Despite new initiatives by SRC to increase the pool of youth donors, their number has remained at about 25% over the last few years.

Blood donation made convenient

7 Making blood donation more convenient and accessible is a priority under the National Blood Programme. To improve donor experience and encourage more to step forward, HSA has implemented a new Donor Portal and an appointment booking system in November 2018 to replace the previous DonorCare platform. With the new Donor Portal, donors can now make an appointment and fill in the Donor Health Assessment Questionnaire and Declaration Form ahead of time. Previously, these forms had to be completed onsite at the blood bank before donation. The one-stop service also allows blood donors to check their donation milestones and histories.

8 Since May this year, SRC has also started organising bi-monthly mobile blood drives at Sengkang General Hospital, to make blood donation more convenient for residents living in Punggol and Sengkang. At the ceremony, HSA and SRC announced the launch of a fourth satellite blood collection centre at the new Punggol Town Hub, projected to be completed in 2022. The new blood bank aims to offer greater convenience to blood donors living, working and studying in the Northeast region.

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About World Blood Donor Day

World Blood Donor Day is dedicated to individuals who voluntarily and regularly donate their blood to help save lives. It also aims to create wider awareness of the importance of voluntary blood donation and encourage more people to become regular blood donors. This year’s theme - “*blood*

donation and universal access to safe blood transfusion” - strongly encourages more people all over the world to become blood donors and donate blood regularly – actions which are key to building a strong foundation of sustainable national blood supplies that are sufficient to meeting the needs of all patients requiring transfusion. The slogan, “**Safe blood for all**”, was developed to raise awareness of the universal need for safe blood in the delivery of healthcare and the crucial roles that voluntary donations play in achieving the goal of universal health coverage.

The annual World Blood Donor Day is sponsored by four international organisations: The World Health Organisation (WHO), the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), the International Federation of Blood Donor Organisations and the International Society of Blood Transfusion.

For more information, please visit <https://www.who.int/campaigns/world-blood-donor-day/2019>.

About the Singapore Red Cross Blood Donor Recruitment Programme

The Singapore Red Cross (SRC) was appointed the National Blood Donor Recruiter in April 2001. Together with our partner-in-service, the Blood Services Group of the Health Sciences Authority, we aim to collect sufficient safe blood for the transfusion needs of all our hospitals.

The SRC focuses on three main functions in the National Blood Programme:

- Recruitment, Retention and Recognition of blood donors
- Promotion and Education to increase public awareness on the importance of blood donation
- Organisation of mobile blood donation drives in the community

About HSA’s Blood Services Group

The HSA’s Blood Services Group, as the national blood service, secures the nation's blood supply by ensuring a safe and adequate blood supply. It is responsible for collecting, processing, testing and distributing blood and blood products to all hospitals in Singapore. It also provides specialist transfusion medicine services in immunohaematology and tissue typing and is actively engaged in the cutting-edge therapeutic research area of cell therapy.