

MEDIA RELEASE

HPB's INAUGURAL STROKE AWARENESS CAMPAIGN EMPOWERS PUBLIC TO ACT F.A.S.T TO SAVE LIVES

*National campaign to deepen public understanding of the signs of stroke and
to advocate timely action when stroke occurs*

Singapore, 29 October 2016 – Stroke is a debilitating condition, with serious long-term implications such as cognitive impairment, movement difficulties and communication challenges. In 2014, stroke accounted for up to one in 12 deaths and together with related diseases, was the fourth most common cause of death in Singapore in the same year¹.

2. Stroke can happen to anyone, though seniors aged 65 and above are at higher risk than others. According to a 2016 HPB Seniors' Health Pre-Campaign study conducted among 600 Singaporeans and Permanent Residents², three out of 10 respondents could not identify the signs of stroke. More therefore needs to be done to increase the awareness and knowledge of stroke to encourage timely action.

3. In conjunction with this year's World Stroke Day, the Health Promotion Board (HPB) launched its first Stroke Awareness Campaign to strengthen public understanding of the signs of stroke, highlight that stroke is a medical emergency and emphasise that timely action is key to preventing serious complications. This campaign is supported by the Singapore National Stroke Association (SNSA), Stroke Support Station (S3) and the National University Health System (NUHS).

4. The Stroke Awareness Campaign is the fourth in a series of healthy lifestyle campaigns by HPB under the National Seniors' Health Programme. The Programme is one of the key initiatives under the Action Plan for Successful Ageing (www.successful-ageing.sg).

Identifying signs of stroke using F.A.S.T

5. Recognising this, this campaign aims to better reach out to caregivers and members of the public to equip them with the ability to recognise the signs of stroke. Stroke is an emergency that demands immediate medical attention.

6. F.A.S.T, which is used internationally, is a simple way for the public to remember and identify the common signs of stroke so that they can act immediately.

Face: Is it drooping on one side?

Arm: Can they lift both arms and keep them there?

Speech: Does it sound strange or unclear?

Time: Call 995 immediately if you spot any of these signs.

¹ Ministry of Health 2014.

² 2016 Health Promotion Board's Seniors' Health Pre-Campaign Study.

7. An information booklet has been developed and will be distributed through HPB's partners, including Community Clubs/Centres under the People's Association, Guardian*, Unity and Watsons* retail pharmacies, polyclinics and restructured hospitals (Alexandra Health System, Eastern Health Alliance, National Healthcare Group, National University Health System, Sengkang Health and SingHealth). Members of the public can visit www.HealthyAgeing.sg/FAST for updates on the distribution of the information booklet. In addition, an educational video featuring tips on how to reduce the risks of stroke will also be made available on the website.

United against stroke

8. To educate the public on how to recognise stroke and the importance of taking immediate action when one occurs, a public forum³ will be organised on 5 November 2016 at the HPB Auditorium. This forum will be jointly organised by HPB and several partners, including the Singapore National Stroke Association (SNSA), Stroke Support Station (S3) and its partner, the National University Health System (NUHS). At the forum, participants can learn about stroke prevention measures and post stroke care including rehabilitation and support services that are available. The forum will include stroke survivors and caregivers sharing their experience with stroke management.

9. "Stroke can strike any one and it can result in profound and lasting effects on their quality of life. It is a condition that can be prevented through simple and actionable steps, and its severity can be mitigated through timely treatment. Through the Stroke Awareness Campaign, we want to improve public understanding of the common signs of stroke and the need for urgent medical care. This will help stroke patients access medical care promptly, giving them the best chance of a good recovery," said Mr Zee Yoong Kang, Chief Executive Officer, Health Promotion Board.

Reducing the risk of stroke

10. Leading a healthy lifestyle which includes maintaining a healthy weight, engaging in regular physical activity, having a healthy diet rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains and low in fats, not smoking and limiting alcohol intake can reduce the risk of stroke.

12. Uncontrolled chronic conditions such as high blood pressure, diabetes and high cholesterol can lead to stroke. Early detection and treatment of these conditions can prevent stroke and other complications. Individuals over the age of 40 years should attend regular health screening for these conditions and follow-up with their doctor. If individuals are diagnosed with these chronic conditions, they should take their medications as prescribed by their doctor and actively manage their conditions through adopting lifestyle changes to reduce the risk of stroke.

The National Seniors' Health programme

13. The National Seniors' Health Programme aims to raise awareness among seniors to keep healthy, and encourage and empower seniors to take charge of their health so they can maintain their physical well-being, mental well-being and functional health. The inaugural campaign was launched in September last year with an exercise video for seniors titled "7

* Distribution of information booklet will be at selected outlets.

³ Forum will be held on 5 November, 9.00am-12.30pm, at the HPB Auditorium. Public can register via healthyageing@hpb.gov.sg. Limited to 200 seats.

Easy Exercises to an Active Lifestyle”. This year, HPB rolled out a nutrition campaign to help seniors understand the importance of a healthy diet and to eat healthily, and an inaugural Falls Prevention Awareness Campaign that educated seniors and their caregivers on the five simple tips to reduce the risk of falls.

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About Health Promotion Board

The Health Promotion Board was established as a statutory board under the Ministry of Health, Singapore, in 2001 with the vision of building “A Nation of Healthy People”. The Health Promotion Board aims to empower the people of Singapore to attain optimal health, increase the quality and years of healthy life and prevent illness, disability and premature death. As the key agency overseeing national health promotion and disease prevention programmes, HPB spearheads health education, promotion and prevention programmes as well as creates a health-supportive environment in Singapore. It develops and organises relevant health promotion and disease prevention programmes, reaching out to the healthy, the at-risk and the unhealthy at all stages of life – children, youths, adults and older Singapore residents. Its health promotion programmes include nutrition, mental health, physical activity, smoking control and communicable disease education. HPB also promotes healthy ageing, integrated health screening, and chronic disease education and management.

More information can be found at www.hpb.gov.sg.

About the National University Health System

National University Health System (NUHS) is an integrated academic regional health system in Singapore that delivers value-driven, innovative and sustainable healthcare.

Grouping National University Hospital (NUH), National University Cancer Institute, Singapore (NCIS), National University Heart Centre, Singapore (NUHCS), National University Centre for Oral Health (NUCOHS), National University of Singapore (NUS) Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine, NUS Faculty of Dentistry and NUS Saw Swee Hock School of Public Health under a common governance structure, NUHS creates synergies for the advancement of health by integrating patient care, health science education and biomedical research.

NUHS also works closely with health and social care partners in the public, private and people sectors to develop and implement programmes that contribute to a healthy and engaged population in the West.

For more information on NUHS, visit www.nuhs.edu.sg

About the Singapore National Stroke Association

The Singapore National Stroke Association (SNSA) is the national support group for stroke survivors and caregivers. Registered under the Societies Act in December 1996, SNSA was granted Charity Status in November 1998. SNSA is a member of the Health Endowment Fund and a member of the National Council of Social Service since March 1999.

SNSA was formed by the very people they serve – stroke survivors and caregivers, with guidance from doctors and other health professionals. SNSA provides help, support and information to stroke survivors and caregivers. In addition, we seek to raise awareness of stroke prevention and management. SNSA does not replace the work of other government or private organisations in this space, but rather, seeks to complement their good work.

SNSA depends fully on the generosity of individual and corporate donors for financial support. We warmly welcome you to join us in our mission to support stroke survivors and their caregivers so that they can continue to lead quality lives.

More information can be found at www.snsa.org.sg.

About the Stroke Support Station (S3)

Stroke Support Station (S3) is Singapore's first dedicated wellness centre catered to stroke survivors and their caregivers. Aimed at offering a unique platform for consistent stroke support while paying special attention to caregivers' and survivors' needs, S3's unique framework is grounded in the practice of R.E.A.L (Re-learn & Enjoy Active Living) that fosters a conducive environment for all involved in the stroke recovery journey.

S3 and NUHS signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to formalise their partnership to increase awareness on stroke and advance advocacy to enable an inclusive society and also to achieve a common vision to address the physical, socio-emotional and psychological needs in stroke survivors and their caregivers in a holistic and sustainable manner.

More information can be found at www.s3.org.sg.