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10 YEARS OF INSPIRING HEALTHY LIVING

***The Health Promotion Board marks a decade of promoting health
with all 800 staff deployed nationwide to roll out healthy lifestyle programmes to the aged;
and launches the national colorectal cancer screening programme***

As part of its 10th year anniversary, the Health Promotion Board (HPB) has involved its entire staff in a series of community events happening nationwide in 34 community clubs today. HPB staff will spend this morning engaging with more than 4,000 needy and aged residents by demonstrating ways to lead healthier lifestyles through interactive games and physical activity demonstrations. This ground-up initiative is aimed at empowering members of the community with knowledge so that they become ambassadors to their peers and loved ones and create a sustainable momentum of healthy living.

2 HPB has also engaged with the community and the private sector for this event. Members of the public, through People's Association's Wellness Programmes, have come forth to take part in these celebrations, while the private sector has shown its support by contributing Healthy Lifestyle Bags, which contain brown rice, biscuits, freeze-dried fruits, sanitiser wipes, whole-grain cereals and healthier choice beverages.

Taking health promotion on to the next decade

3 "In the last 10 years, the Health Promotion Board has touched children, youth, working adults, parents, seniors and the elderly, where they study, play, work, eat, shop and live. Our programmes are inclusive, in that we target to reach all Singapore residents from all walks of life.

4 "Singapore residents have high awareness of health issues but awareness is not enough. We want to make healthy lifestyle the effortless choice. Our strategy for the next 10 years is to partner other public agencies, community and the private sectors to create a healthy eco-system environment that makes healthy lifestyle part of every Singapore resident's daily routine.

5 "We will make our programmes pervasive by going deeper, working with the community and grassroots groups to co-develop, manage and sustain them. We have identified community leaders, who are trained to be health champions, ambassadors and mentors, to take ownership of the programmes. With our guidance, they will be able to gather people from their own circles and organise activities or exercise together, which helps spread our messages deeper into the community

and ultimately into every household in Singapore,” said Mr Ang Hak Seng, CEO, Health Promotion Board.

Importance of Screening for Colorectal Cancer

6 One key message included in today’s programme is the importance of screening for colorectal cancer, Singapore’s number one cancer. This cancer ranks number two among women, after breast cancer, and it is the most common cancer for men. It often shows no symptoms in its early stages. There are close to 1,460 newly diagnosed cases and 640 deaths in Singapore related to colorectal cancer each year¹. (An information paper on colorectal cancer is enclosed for further reference.)

7 “By 2030, 1 in 5 Singaporeans will be 65 years and older and the chances of getting colorectal cancer increases with age, especially after the age of 50. HPB plans to tackle this issue by reaching out to close to 900,000 residents aged 50 years and older over the next three years to encourage them to take action and be screened for colorectal cancer,” said Mr Ang.

8 The kits used to test for colorectal cancer, Faecal Immunochemical Test (also known as FIT) kits, are made available today through a collaboration between HPB, the producers of the kits, testing labs as well as the various constituencies. Participants will take the test home, follow the necessary steps and send off the samples to the testing lab. Results will be ready in a month from the submission of the kits to the testing lab, and should there be positive results, HPB, together with community groups, will call them to help them make an appointment with a hospital for further testing.

National Colorectal Screening Programme

9 Following the event, HPB will be sending out letters over the next three years to residents in the high-risk group to remind them to take the annual FIT test. HPB will also work with the Singapore Cancer Society and the community to widen the reach. At the same time, the FIT kits will be available at more than 700 Chronic Disease Management Programme (CDMP) GP clinics, hospitals, polyclinics and the Singapore Cancer Society. Moving forward, HPB will also work through the People’s Association’s Wellness Programme to offer an integrated screening service to the residents.

10 To increase awareness of the cancer to all Singapore residents, HPB has developed a short film; television, print and radio commercials to address the misconceptions people have towards screening for colorectal cancer. HPB will also be driving the message deeper into the community by leveraging on events such as *getai* shows.

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¹ Source: Singapore Cancer Registry, 2003-2007