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MEDIA RELEASE

HEALTH PROMOTION BOARD DEVELOPS FIRST MENTAL WELLBEING SCALE REFLECTIVE OF ASIAN VALUES AND BELIEFS

The Health Promotion Board's (HPB) mental health promotion and education programmes have, in the past two years, focused on raising awareness of positive mental health. HPB now marks a milestone in mental health promotion in Singapore with the introduction of the Singapore Mental Wellbeing Scale. The scale, the first-of-its-kind developed in Asia, is reflective of our Asian values and multi-ethnic beliefs and philosophies.

2 According to the World Health Organization (WHO), holistic health is the complete state of physical, mental and social wellbeing. Within the mental health spectrum itself, the importance of mental wellbeing is undeniable. A positive mental attitude and mental resilience directly impact an individual's total wellbeing.

Singapore Mental Wellbeing Scale

3 The Scale was developed through focus group discussions to understand what mental wellbeing is, locally. This was tested against international tools such as the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (WEMWBS) from United Kingdom. While aspects of international measuring tools for measuring mental wellbeing proved helpful, they do not take into account the influence of local considerations such as values, culture and multi-ethnicity.

4 The Singapore Mental Wellbeing Scale was developed in partnership with the Psychology Department from the Nanyang Technological University. Extensive research

and a study have revealed five aspects that define mental wellbeing among Singapore residents:

- Self-esteem - Believing in your potential and engaging in lifelong growth and development;
- Social connectedness - Nurturing a good social support network;
- Emotional intelligence - Appreciating and understanding self, others and circumstances;
- Resilience - Handling life's challenges by being optimistic; and
- Cognitive efficacy - Realistic thinking; thinking clearly and rationally.

5 The mental wellbeing study showed Singapore residents share some common views on mental wellbeing with their Western counterparts. A major finding was that Singapore residents placed greater emphasis on social connectedness, in that their mental wellbeing is inter-dependent with positive relationships with their family, friends and colleagues. These relationships and connections are regarded as a source of support. This is a reflection of our cultural norms.

Mental Wellbeing of Workforce

6 “Working with the workforce is an important first step for HPB, as productivity is the engine for growth. This is in line with the government’s call to raise productivity through greater investment in workers’ training and their mental wellbeing. Mental wellbeing is an important cornerstone of overall health. A healthy worker is a productive worker,” said Mr Ang Hak Seng, Chief Executive Officer, Health Promotion Board.

7 In the next three months, HPB will be working with the trade associations and the Singapore National Employers Federation (SNEF) to support companies, large and small, to implement an enhanced and comprehensive mental health programme for their employees.

8 For example, introducing enhanced mental health education modules of the *Treasure Your Mind (TYM)* programme (a series of interactive talks and skills-based workshops with an increased focus on the dimensions of mental wellbeing captured in the mental wellbeing scale); Measurement of the impact of the *TYM* programme using the mental wellbeing scale; Engagement with employees with follow up resources and activities after participation in the *TYM* programme; and implementing a framework to assist companies to implement supportive workplace practices including access to resources i.e. Workplace Health Promotion Grant to facilitate implementation, guidelines to enable companies to implement

sustainable and effective mental health programmes and initiatives, leadership training to influence workplace environment, and promote access to relevant individual employee support services such as e.g. counselling, group interventions, critical incident management services.

9 “The Singapore Mental Wellbeing Scale is a milestone for HPB as it has an impact on our mental health programmes. The Scale will be our barometer for the state of mental wellbeing of our community. This knowledge will enable us to chart a roadmap, design smarter interventions and evaluate our progress as we fine-tune our policies and programmes to reach our goal of having a healthy hence, productive community and population,” Mr Ang Hak Seng, Chief Executive Officer, Health Promotion Board.

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