



## PRESS RELEASE

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# 1.7 Million Singaporeans Already At Risk of Obesity-related Diseases

**Singapore, 15 March 2014** – The National Health Survey 2010 shows that 1.7 million Singaporeans with a Body Mass Index (BMI) of 23 or greater are vulnerable to developing obesity-related diseases such as diabetes and heart diseases. The Survey also found that 1 million Singaporeans with BMI 23 or greater, are either already pre-diabetic, or suffer at least one or more chronic condition such as diabetes.

The Singapore Burden of Diseases study found that obesity-related diseases had the largest impact on health in terms of suffering and cost. The study also found that having a high body mass is the largest single contributor to the national disease burden of diabetes (73%). This figure is set to increase if the nation's obesity rate continues to trend upwards.

Both globally and in Singapore, the prevalence of obesity and overweight in adults has been increasing steadily over the years. Singapore's obesity prevalence increased 0.7 percentage point a year since 2004 to reach nearly 11% in 2010, only one percentage lower than the global average obesity prevalence of 12%.

## **One Million Kg Challenge - a nationwide initiative to help the overweight and obese**

HPB today officially launches the One Million KG Challenge nationwide to nudge and incentivise Singapore residents to achieve and maintain a healthy body weight. HPB is targeting to support Singapore residents to collectively lose one million kilogrammes by 2016.

The One Million KG Challenge is Singapore's first national-level weight management initiative. It marks an expansion of HPB's efforts to battle the bulge by targeting those who are overweight and 'at risk' of becoming obese.

HPB has been encouraged by the response to the first phase of the Challenge introduced in January this year. 18 companies and more than 10,000 individuals have signed up for the Challenge.

Senior Minister of State for Health and Manpower, Dr Amy Khor said, "Obesity is a major contributing factor to chronic illnesses such as diabetes, heart diseases, and stroke, which can affect our quality of life and lead to significant morbidity and mortality. Therefore, it is urgent we curb the rising trend in obesity and heighten awareness on the importance of long-term healthy weight management."

The Challenge is the first national-level weight management programme designed to incentivise individuals to take active steps towards healthier living. Mr Zee Yoong Kang, Chief Executive Officer, HPB said, "The One Million KG Challenge represents HPB's first foray into using behavioural economics to encourage Singaporeans to achieve a healthy weight. Linking incentives directly to the desired outcome of losing excess weight has been shown through research to be an effective mechanism to support individuals to make small but achievable changes to their behaviour and lose excess weight for the long-term."

The One Million KG Challenge is open to Singapore residents between the ages of 18 to 64 whose Body Mass Index (BMI) ranges from 18.5 to 37.4. Singapore residents whose BMI fall between 23 and 37.4 could pledge to lose three kilogrammes in the Challenge. For those whose BMI fall in the 18.5 to 22.9 range, they could participate in the Challenge to maintain their weight.

First-time participants will receive a starter kit and a 'pixel' to redeem a prize to kick-start their weight management journey 'Pixels' will also be awarded when they lose excess weight. Participants can therefore make individualised and manageable 'bite-sized' weight loss goals towards a chance to win a car, a holiday package and shopping vouchers in the Grand Draw to be held in October 2014.

The Challenge will run over two years and will promote healthy eating, exercise and healthier lifestyles for all Singapore residents who join. To help participants in their journey, they will get free health and nutrition advice, exercise videos and plans, plus tools and trackers to stay on track online at [www.millionkg.com](http://www.millionkg.com).

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**Issued by Health Promotion Board**