

MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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IMH Initiates New Community Network to Better Care for People with Schizophrenia

1. The Institute of Mental Health (IMH) has launched a new initiative, the Singapore Schizophrenia Network (SSN), to bring together agencies involved in providing mental healthcare and support to persons who are affected by Schizophrenia.
2. The main objectives of the SSN are:
 - a) To establish collaborations with such agencies to provide better treatment, care and support for persons with Schizophrenia and their families
 - b) To create a common platform for the sharing of information on services and programmes offered by the network members so as to reduce duplication of effort and increase synergies
 - c) To build capability among agencies involved in the care of persons with Schizophrenia
 - d) To create a platform for member agencies to hear from persons with Schizophrenia, their caregivers and families, and to work with them to further improve services and support needed for recovery and integration into society.
3. Schizophrenia, which affects nearly 1 per cent of the population, is a chronic psychiatric disorder that requires long-term medication and treatment. With its early onset during adolescence, Schizophrenia is a debilitating illness and sufferers who are not treated are often trapped in a vicious cycle of relapses, often losing their ability to perform daily functions such as self-care, or engage in work and studies.
4. With active family and community involvement, care for persons with Schizophrenia can be provided at the community level. The SSN will allow member agencies to better coordinate the care and support for such persons.

5. IMH has started involving community agencies in drawing up the care plan of its in-patients whose conditions have been stabilised and are ready for step-down care. With prior consent given by these patients, these agencies can participate in the ward rounds in the hospital which could help facilitate the transfer of care from the hospital to the community facilities. The ward rounds accord these agencies the opportunity to meet the patients who would be referred to their facilities as well as discuss the follow-up care plan with the hospital's multidisciplinary team to ensure continuity of care.
6. To build agencies' capability in mental healthcare, network members will have access to talks and workshops by local and foreign experts. There will also be sharing of best practices from study trips and findings from research.
7. The SSN hopes to work more closely with patients and their families, to get them involved in public education to decrease stigma and discrimination associated with mental illness. The SSN can also facilitate to convey concerns and issues faced by people with Schizophrenia and the partner agencies to policy makers for consideration in policy reviews.
8. A/Prof Chua Hong Choon, Chief Executive Officer, IMH said, "IMH is pleased to take the lead in spearheading this initiative. It is heartening to see the collaborative efforts of our community agencies and the commitment they have to help persons with mental illness and their families. This closely knit network allows us to leverage on the strengths of each agency so that the work we do is more impactful."
9. Mr Steven Ting, Head, Psychiatric Rehabilitation and Recovery Services, Singapore Anglican Community Services (SACS) said, "SACS is pleased to be part of the Singapore Schizophrenia Network as it provides a collaborative platform for all community partners to contribute in their areas of expertise so as to ensure seamless services for people with Schizophrenia in their journey to recovery. We look forward to the collaborations in the future which will enable us to improve in the provision of better mental healthcare support and services."
10. Also supportive of this initiative is Ms Rajeswari K, Executive Director, Singapore Association for Mental Health. She said, "This network will provide opportunities for mutual learning among the partners which will help improve the overall quality of mental health services. By working together, we hope to enhance the quality of life for persons with mental illness and to empower them to recover their lives."

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Members of the Singapore Schizophrenia Network

Members of the Singapore Schizophrenia Network	Chinese Translation
Agency for Integrated Care	护联中心
Caregivers Alliance Limited	照顾者联盟
Caregivers' Association of the Mentally Ill	精神病患关怀者协会
Institute of Mental Health	心理卫生学院
MINDSET	思健
Silver Ribbon (Singapore)	银丝带(新加坡)
Singapore Anglican Community Services	新加坡圣公会社区服务
Singapore Association for Mental Health	新加坡心理健康协会
Sunlove Home	日爱疗养院
Tai Pei Social Service	大悲福利协会

Institute of Mental Health	心理卫生学院
A/Prof Chua Hong Choon Chief Executive Officer Institute of Mental Health	蔡奉俊副教授 行政总裁 心理卫生学院
Steven Ting Head Psychiatric Rehabilitation and Recovery Services Singapore Anglican Community Services	陈召圣 总监 精神康复服务 新加坡圣公会社区服务
Singapore Schizophrenia Network	新加坡精神分裂症协作网络