

MEDIA RELEASE

IMH NURSE HONOURED WITH PRESIDENT'S AWARD 08 – A FITTING TRIBUTE TO 80 YEARS OF PSYCHIATRIC NURSING IN SINGAPORE

- *IMH nurses- a breed apart*
- *Psychiatric nursing - an emerging field*

1st August 08 Singapore - A record number of mental health nurses have clinched the President's Nurses Award. In recognition of the dedication and nursing leadership shown by Yang Chek Binte Salikin, Ministry of Health has presented her with the President's Nurses Award 08. Her selection has added to the number of Institute of Mental Health's (IMH) nurses who've won the nation's highest accolade for nurses. In its 80 years of psychiatry care, IMH has produced four President's Award winners – a fitting tribute to the exceptional calibre of nurses that the Institution has nurtured. Besides Nurse Clinician Yang Chek, IMH's other winners of the President's Nurses Award include: Madam Chua Siew Hong (Assistant Director Nursing, IMH), Ms Pauline Tan (Chief Nursing Officer, MOH), Dr Premarani Kannusamy (Director of Nursing, IMH).

"We are most honoured to have this award bestowed on our nurses and this has come at a timely moment during our 80th anniversary celebrations. It is a tribute to the nurses who tirelessly and compassionately give of themselves to

build bridges of hope for their patients. This award is not just a testimony to the nursing leadership but also a national recognition of the increasingly important role of nurses in mental health care,"said Mr Leong Yew Meng, CEO, IMH.

Embracing the Challenges in Psychiatric Nursing

With over 30 years of experience in nursing, Yang Chek has chosen the road less travelled by specialising in psychiatric nursing, focusing on challenging areas such as addictions and alcohol withdrawal. Her many psychiatric patients and their families have heart-warming testimonies of her selfless compassion and drive to reach out to help them conquer their addictions. Besides being registered as one of the 1st Advanced Practice Nurse in mental health, she is also a certified Substance Abuse Counsellor, obtained from the International Certification and Reciprocity Consortium/Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse. Yang Chek will be undoubtedly one of the leading nurses spearheading efforts to contain problem gambling in Singapore. "I would like to dedicate this highest accolade for nursing to all IMH nurses and patients. They have taught me so much," said Ms Yang Chek.

Enhancing Psychiatric Nursing Manpower Development

Yang Chek was from the pioneer batch of students to graduate with the Master of Nursing degree conferred by the National University of Singapore in 2006. She was 52 then, and undaunted by the challenge of upgrading herself at that age. Over the years, IMH nurses have spearheaded a number of

initiatives as part of the Ministry of Health's National Mental Health Blueprint which maps out strategies to develop manpower development. This includes the development and implementation of courses like the Advanced Practice Nurse Programme and the Nurse Clinician Programme.

Advanced Practice Nurses Programme

Advanced Practice Nurses Programme in IMH/WH equips nurses with the skills to provide direct patient care through collaborative multi-disciplinary management and treatment. Highly qualified nurses with Masters degrees work with doctors to make key clinical decisions on patient treatment plans. This effectively transforms nursing practice to one where nurses engage critical enquiry and analytical clinical decision-making and assessment in the patient care management process. The inaugural programme has produced ten Advanced Practice Nurses trained in mental health since 2003.

Launch of Nurse Clinician Mental Health Course

The Nurse Clinician (Mental Health) course –This training programme aims to enable nurse leaders at IMH/WH to not only uphold the quality and standards of mental health nursing, but also to further upgrade the skills and knowledge of highly experienced senior nurses. With these skills nurses are able to mentor, supervise and role-model appropriate behaviours and skill sets to their younger colleagues. This works to produce a win-win solution. Older workers are equipped with skills to increase their relevance. Younger nurses are in turn trained by them and in today's multi-generational, multi-diverse workforce and there is overall improvement in standards of nursing care. This

training programme is fully funded by the Workforce Development Agency which will continue to support another 40 participants in the coming months.

About the Institute of Mental Health

The Institute of Mental Health/Woodbridge Hospital (IMH/WH) is a leading mental health centres in Asia offering a multi-faceted and comprehensive range of psychiatric, rehabilitative and counselling services designed to meet the needs of namely (i) children & adolescents, (ii) adults and (iii) the elderly. IMH/WH's multi-disciplinary approach to patient care is supported by the departments of Nursing, Clinical Psychology, Occupational Therapy, and Medical Social Work. Offering inpatient care and outpatient care, it has also established various satellite clinics around Singapore. IMH/WH provides community education and supports corporations in the promotion of mental health and wellness. As a specialist centre, it integrates research in the best interest of patient-care. For its outstanding contribution to research in health promotion, IMH's Early Psychosis Intervention Programme has won the World Health Organization's State of Kuwait Prize as well as the National Medical Excellence Award conferred by the Ministry of Health. IMH/WH is the first mental health institution in Asia to receive the Joint Commission International (JCI) accreditation, an award that represents a worldwide consensus on quality patient care and international best practices.

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