

EMBARGOED UNTIL DELIVERY

Speech by Mrs Lim Hwee Hua, Minister in Prime Minister's Office, Second Minister for Finance and Transport at the Launch of “*Celebrate Wellness*” Roadshow, 23 January 2010

Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. I am delighted to be here this afternoon for the launch of the inaugural Celebrate Wellness roadshow.

2. With the start of the New Year, I am sure most of us would have made resolutions for ourselves. Often, good health may not be the first thing we think about, especially for us women due to the many demands from family and work. However, without good health, many things in life lose their meaning.

3. In October last year, I announced that the PAP women MPs, under Project WINGS, a community initiative to help the disadvantaged women and children in our society level up, have come together with various community partners to promote healthy lifestyle among women. We are working with the Singapore Cancer Society, Health Promotion Board, People's Association WIN Council, Great Eastern Life Assurance Co Ltd, KK Women's and Children's Hospital, Tsao Foundation, the Singapore Totalisator Board and the Singapore Turf Club under the banner of '*Celebrate Wellness*'. Through this initiative, we will focus on fighting breast cancer, the most common cancer among women in Singapore.

4. Mammography can enable us to detect breast cancer early when it is still small and cannot be felt by the hands. Treatment at this stage will be highly effective and the 5-year survival rate is almost 100%. Despite this, the National Health Surveillance Survey (2007) carried out by MOH showed that only 4 in 10 women aged 50-69 have had a screening mammogram in the last two years. It is therefore timely to step up our battle against breast cancer, especially to help women in this age group form a positive habit of regular screening every 2 years.

5. Under the ***Celebrate Wellness*** initiative, a series of 10 roadshows will be held at the five districts over these two years. These roadshows aim to educate women on health related issues such as mental wellbeing, physical activity, healthy eating and, of course, the importance of early detection of breast cancer. Four more roadshows have been planned for this year – in the North West, South East, South West and Central Districts. A variety of health activities such as healthy cooking classes, mental health workshops and exercise sessions will be conducted after the roadshows; I hope that as many of you as possible will sign up for these activities and get started on your resolution to live healthily in this new year.

6. Invitation letters will be sent out in batches to Singaporean women who have not had a screening mammogram in the past 3 years. In the North East District, letters have already been sent to more than 47,000 women. In an effort to encourage women to take the first step towards screening, and with the support of the Singapore Totalisator Board, a one-time subsidised mammogram screening at just \$25 will be offered to this group of women at the participating polyclinics. This is a further 50%

discount from what one would currently pay (\$50) for a subsidized screening mammogram at the polyclinics. I hope to see all of you who have received our invitation letter taking advantage of this one-time offer.

7. But we should not stop here. It is recommended that women aged 50 to 69 years go for a mammogram once every two years. Hence, today, I'm extremely delighted to inform you that for women who have attended the first screen under the **Celebrate Wellness** initiative, further support for your second mammogram, also at a reduced \$25, has been made possible through the generosity of the Khoo Teck Puat Foundation. I want to express my deep gratitude to the Singapore Totalisator Board and the Khoo Teck Puat Foundation for their whole-hearted support of **Celebrate Wellness**. So women, please remember to make a date with screening every two years.

8. Given this strong support, what remains for us is to act to protect ourselves, and for the men, your wives, our mothers, our sisters and generally women we care about, against breast cancer. Encouraging our women to form the habit of preventive health screening is extremely crucial. Towards this end, I would also like to urge the Minister for Health to consider allowing Medisave to be used for screening out the top killers.

9. Finally, I wish to thank all our partners once again for your tremendous effort and great enthusiasm in making **Celebrate Wellness** happen – and looking at our audience here today, I'm sure **Celebrate Wellness** will be a great success. Thank you.

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