

EMBARGOED UNTIL DELIVERY

Speech by Mr K. Shanmugam, Minister for Law and Minister for Home Affairs, MP for Sembawang GRC and Adviser to Chong Pang Grassroots Organisations at the “Celebrate Wellness” Roadshow, 11 July 2010

Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. Good morning, it is my pleasure to be here today to support NorthWest District's 'Celebrate Wellness' event.
2. We live in a fast-paced and competitive society. Many of us may not regard health as the top priority in our lives. We often neglect our own health due to the demands of family and work.
3. Today, we also have more women in our workforce compared to 10 years ago. However, women's role as the family's main caregiver remains unchanged. They are the family anchor. This makes caring for their health an important task. But, are our women doing so? We know that exercise is good for us but the National Health Surveillance Survey (2007) showed that only 2 in 10 women exercised regularly during their leisure time. Women also know that regular mammograms are important, and yet, the same survey showed that only 4 in 10 women aged 50-69 had had a screening mammogram in the preceding two years. Breast cancer is the No. 1 cancer among Singaporean women and the best thing that a woman can do for herself is to go for a screening mammogram to detect breast cancer while it is still small and more easily treated.

4. I applaud the joint efforts of our women MPs, grassroots and various partners who have come together to organise this Celebrate Wellness event to promote health to our residents. Such an effort, which brings community health to the doorstep of our residents, is very important. One of the project's initiatives is to offer a \$25 subsidy for women aged 50 to 69 who have not yet formed the habit of going for regular screening mammograms so that they only pay \$25.00. About 4,000 women have come forward to be screened for breast cancer since the launch of this initiative in January 2010. The committee is also working hard together with the community leaders to encourage women who have not yet taken up this one-time subsidy to come forward for screening.

5. I recognise that the efforts of many sectors have come together to help improve the health of our nation. The grassroots organisations, community partners and the healthcare sector are all working hard to reach out to all of you through many different and innovative channels. One example: the Health Promotion Board plans to release a movie 'Love Cuts' in September this year to raise awareness of breast cancer among our women. Our top local Mediacorp actress, Zoe Tay will be starring in the movie, playing her part to raise the awareness of this disease and of the importance of breast cancer screening. I sincerely hope that many of you will watch the movie with your family, loved ones and spread the message - encourage them to go for a mammogram, if they have not done so yet.

6. Let us take up this challenge - to be responsible for our own health. Once again, I would like to thank our community partners for their support in making healthy lifestyle our mission.