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SPEECH BY MR CHAN SOO SEN, PARLIAMENTARY

SECRETARY (PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE &

MINISTRY OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT),

AT THE SINGAPORE NATIONAL STROKE ASSOCIATION'S

"STROKE WALK 99" ON SUNDAY, 14 MAR 99, 9.00 AM

NGEE ANN CITY, CIVIC PLAZA

Good morning

Mr Alfred Lee

President, Singapore National Stroke Association

Mr Tan Yee Cheow

Vice-President, Singapore National Stroke Association

Ladies and Gentlemen

We gather here this morning for the "Stroke Walk 99" organised by the Singapore National Stroke Association to raise funds for the Association. Amongst other things, the Association has three priorities in 1999: to move to a larger premise, to establish a resource library, and to organise more public education programmes.

2 These tasks have become more urgent. The number of admissions to hospitals for stroke has been on the increase, from 6,000 in 1994 to 8,000 in 1996. Together with heart disease and cancer, they make up the top three killers in Singapore. With our population ageing, this number will continue to rise. We must create more awareness so that our community is better prepared in preventing and coping with the disease.

3 Stroke is a disabling disease. Studies have shown that only about one third of stroke survivors recover fully from it. About one third recover partially, and a third do not recover at all. Recovery is a slow process, taking weeks, months or even years. The victims need strong will to achieve recovery.

4 The effects of stroke affects also the family members. They need to make adjustments, and will undergo psychological and emotional stress. They need the empathy, support, and encouragement of the community in their care-giving roles.

5 I feel these when a neighbour of mine suffered from stroke last year. He was a successful businessman, an active grassroots leader, and certainly a strong man. When I visited him in hospital, I found him completely helpless. His family members were devastated. Today, after one year, he is still learning to walk and speak. He is fortunate to have a good family. With their support and his own strong will, I feel he will recover.

6 I can therefore empathise with the three priorities of the Association. I wish you all the best in your commendable endeavours. I would like to thank all present this morning for your support to this fund-raising walk, and the work of the Singapore National Stroke Association. You will feel good for having done good. Have a very pleasant morning.

Thank you.