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Singapore Government

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SPEECH BY MR OTHMAN HARON EUSOFE

MINISTER OF STATE FOR MANPOWER

AT THE

PERTAPIS HALFWAY HOUSE

10TH ANNIVERSARY CUM GRADUATION NITE 99

ON SATURDAY 25 SEP 99 AT 8.00 PM

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I am happy to be here tonight to celebrate with you the 10th Anniversary cum Graduation Nite of the Pertapis Halfway House. I would like to commend the management and staff of Pertapis for 10 years of excellent work in all aspects of treatment and rehabilitation of recovering drug addicts. I am told since its inception in June 89, more than 1,000 recovering drug addicts have come under Pertapis Halfway House treatment and rehabilitation programme.

Pertapis is one of the three Halfway Houses managed by the Muslim Community

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organisations. It provides both residential and outpatient aftercare for recovering Malay Muslim drug addicts. In April 95, Pertapis participated in the Halfway House (HWH) Scheme, which I understand is a community base rehabilitation programme introduced by the Ministry of Home Affairs, which allows selected DRC inmates to spend their last six months of mandatory treatment and rehabilitation in Halfway Houses. Here they go through religious or social counselling, work therapy and perform community service. I am told this scheme benefit inmates who genuinely have the desire to change but lack family support. Up to January 1999, a total of 423 residents were admitted in Pertapis (HWH) under the above programme. Out of this number, 329 residents or 76% have completed the programme successfully. Another 63 residents or 14.5% are still undergoing rehabilitation at the Halfway House. Another 41 residents or 9.5% relapsed because of absconding from the scheme or misconduct.

For residential services Pertapis offers the Narcotics Anonymous meetings, Family Support Group and Self-Help Group as well as Out Patient or Drop-in Counselling. It also provides the recovering addicts useful work activities such as banner and sign making as well as silk screen painting.

Drug dependency is a complex problem and it involves the individual, family and society. I am told there are often many relapses before the individual decides he has had enough and want to go straight. Some of the factors that lead to relapse revolve around the recovering addicts failure to readjust to his family and the family's failure to understand the problem of drug addiction. Involvement of the family in rehabilitation and treatment is therefore crucial. Recognising this Pertapis has always involved the families in its programmes and the Family Support Group is now actively involved in Pertapis programmes.

Drug abuse problem can weaken the foundation of the community and in a place like Singapore with a small population it is important that we take strong and urgent enforcement to eradicate this problem. We have a multi-pronged strategy against drug abuse which include preventive drug education, vigorous enforcement of our tough anti-drug laws and enhanced treatment and rehabilitation. Good aftercare support can contribute to the reduction in relapse rate of drug addicts. With strong aftercare support the relapse rate has fallen from the peak of 81.2% in 1994 to 52.1% in 1998.

## National Archives of Singapore

Together with other halfway houses, Pertapis is an important strategic partner of the Government in provision of aftercare support for rehabilitating drug addicts. Pertapis has made a significant contribution to the improvement in Singapore's drug situation.

Let me end now by congratulating Pertapis' management, staff and volunteers for your sterling contribution and hard and dedicated work. My very best wishes to all of you for a good and successful future. Thank you.