

To:  
cc: (bcc: NHB NASReg/NHB/SINGOV)  
Subject: (Embargoed) Speech by Mr Lim Hng Kiang, 18 Mar 2000, 2.38pm

# *Singapore Government*

# ***PRESS RELEASE***

Media Division, Ministry of Information and the Arts, #36-00 PSA Building, 460 Alexandra Road,  
Singapore 119963. Tel: 3757794/5

---

## **EMBARGO INSTRUCTIONS**

The attached press release/speech is **EMBARGOED UNTIL AFTER DELIVERY**.  
Please check against delivery.  
For assistance call 3757795

---

**SPRInter 4.0**, Singapore's Press Releases on the Internet, is located at:  
<http://www.gov.sg/sprinter/>

---

**Embargoed until delivery**  
**Please check against delivery**

**SPEECH BY MR LIM HNG KIANG, MINISTER FOR HEALTH  
AND SECOND MINISTER FOR FINANCE, AT THE OFFICIAL  
OPENING OF THE SALVATION ARMY NURSING HOME,  
PEACEHAVEN, ON 18 MARCH 2000 AT 2.38 PM**

National Archives of Singapore

General John Gowans, International Leader of The Salvation Army,  
Distinguished Guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen:

## **Introduction**

I am very happy to be here today at the opening of Peacehaven.  
First, let me congratulate The Salvation Army on this special occasion.  
The opening of Peacehaven signifies not just the commitment of The

Salvation Army to caring for the elderly sick, it also demonstrates how community organisations can work hand in hand with the government to provide a range of health care services to meet the needs of the elderly.

2 Our population is ageing. Today, we have about 220,000 people aged 65 years and above, making up about 7% of our population. By 2010, we will have about 312,000 elderly persons. By 2030, we will have 800,000 elderly, comprising 18% of the population.

### **Health in the later years**

3 The challenge for all of us is how to grow to a ripe old age and yet remain fit and independent.

4 The capacity of our biological systems – for example, muscular strength and heart function - increases during the first years of life, reaches its peak in early adulthood and declines thereafter. How fast it declines, however, is largely determined by factors related to lifestyle. The natural decline in heart function can be hastened by smoking, leaving the individual with lower functional capacity than would normally be expected for his/her age.

5 Lifestyle related diseases, such as high blood pressure, diabetes and heart disease are a major cause of disability in old age. The 1998 National Health Survey showed that diabetes becomes more common as one grows older. Among those aged 40 – 49 years, one in ten had diabetes, among the 50 – 59 years, one in five and among the 60 – 69 years, one in three was afflicted with the disease. The picture is even worse for hypertension. Among those aged 40 – 49 years, one in three

had hypertension, among the 50 – 59 years, one in two and among the 60 – 69 years, two in three had this condition.

6 The complications of diabetes and hypertension are kidney failure, blindness, severe infections of the feet requiring amputation of the leg, heart failure and stroke. We will, as a nation, need to take immediate action to prevent these diseases and complications from developing.

7 Knowing that health and well-being in old age is largely the result of the lifestyle practices throughout life, it is important for us to:

Firstly, lead a healthy lifestyle to prevent the chronic diseases;

Secondly, go for regular health screening to detect these diseases early; and

Thirdly, make sure that we follow the treatment prescribed to prevent complications and disabilities.

### **Care for the elderly sick**

8 For the elderly with severe disabilities, we must have in place healthcare services and facilities to provide care which is appropriate and affordable.

9 VWOs play an important role in meeting the healthcare needs of the elderly sick in the lower income group. The Government will support the VWOs in these efforts.

### **Government's support for VWOs**

10 My Ministry is happy to be a partner with The Salvation Army in the development of this new nursing home. We have provided 90% of the capital cost of the building and equipping the home. We will also provide subsidy for the operating expenditure to run the Home.

11 The Government can help to provide the hardware. But caring for the elderly sick needs heartware as well. Caring for the elderly sick demands a high level of motivation and compassion. VWOs, with their spirit of altruism and supported by a network of dedicated volunteers, can provide the heartware that gives that additional touch so well appreciated by the patients.

12 I would like to commend The Salvation Army for taking the initiative to expand its health care services for the elderly. From a 70 bedded nursing home, started in the 1970s, to the opening of this new 339 bedded nursing home, is a quantum leap. The Salvation Army's commitment in caring for the elderly deserves special commendation and support. We greatly appreciate the effort that The Salvation Army has put in to develop this nursing home.

13 Once again, my warmest congratulations and best wishes to The Salvation Army on the opening of Peacehaven.

Thank you.