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Subject: (EMBARGOED) Speech by Mr Chan Soo Sen, 15 April 2000, 2.00 PM

# *Singapore Government*

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**SPEECH BY MR CHAN SOO SEN, PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY  
(PRIME MINISTER' S OFFICE & MINISTRY OF HEALTH), AT  
THE HEAD INJURY SUPPORT GROUP ANNUAL PUBLIC FORUM  
ON SATURDAY, 15 APRIL 2000 AT 2.00 PM AT TAN TOCK SENG  
HOSPITAL THEATRETTE**

National Archives of Singapore

Good afternoon  
Dr Luisa Lee  
CEO, Tan Tock Seng Hospital

Members of Head Injury Support Group

Distinguished guests

Ladies and gentlemen

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to the Head Injury Support Group's Annual Public Forum.

2 Brain injuries are sudden and often catastrophic events affecting thousands in Singapore. No age group is spared and often, survivors are young and economically productive. Life is never the same after a brain injury, and its effects are not limited to just the patient; but affect the entire family as well.

3 Known as the "Silent Epidemic of the New Millennium," survivors of brain injuries often look normal and may not have obvious physical deficits. This may mean that people with brain injuries do not receive support that could be available if the injury was more apparent.

4 On the other hand, approximately 30% may remain physically and mentally disabled and dependent on others for all their essential activities of daily living. Many caregivers, may remain uncertain about how to cope with aspects of care, emotional and psychological needs of brain injured persons.

5 With this in mind, the Head Injury Support Group (HISG) was formed in 1992, by the National University Hospital. Since then, it has combined forces with Tan Tock Seng Hospital in 1996 and the Singapore General Hospital in 1997. All three hospitals are actively involved in the acute care and rehabilitation of patients with brain injuries.

6 The Head Injury Support Group provides psychological and emotional support to persons with brain injury. It is a voluntary group comprising a multi-disciplinary team of healthcare professionals such as neurosurgeons, rehabilitation physicians, occupational therapists, speech therapists, physiotherapists, psychologists, medical social workers and ICU nurses, people with brain injuries, their families and friends and other volunteers.

7 The Head Injury Support Group relies largely on the time and energy of these professionals who work in the field of brain injury, to volunteer precious hours to plan, organise and implement professional development events such as organising seminars, workshops and the annual public forum.

8 This annual public forum offers an opportunity for the group to raise public awareness about this problem. It also gives members of the public, persons with brain injury, their families and friends a chance to come together, to absorb information, provide peer support and raise awareness of the problems that may occur after a brain injury.

9 This year, I am told the forum has taken a bolder theme and will include topics which depart from the usual medical and paramedical issues. The often-taboo topic of sex and sexuality and issues close to the heart of patients and their families will be aired.

10I applaud the efforts of the Head Injury Support Group and the three hospitals who have put together this initiative to inform, educate and create awareness of brain injury. The forum represents an excellent opportunity for members of the public and health care professionals to interact, share and address their various concerns.

11With that I would like to wish you a fruitful and enlightening afternoon and extend my best wishes to the Head Injury Support Group all success in their future endeavours.

Thank you.

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