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**SPEECH BY MR WAN HUSSIN ZOOHRI, PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY
(HEALTH AND CULTURE), AT THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH
COURTESY CAMPAIGN 1983 GRAND FINALE AT THE SCHOOL OF
NURSING AUDITORIUM, SINGAPORE GENERAL HOSPITAL
ON FRIDAY, 29 JULY 1983 AT 7.00 PM.**

Once again the annual Courtesy Campaign serves to remind us that as providers of health care services we are dealing with human beings. We can so easily be obsessed with medical technology and gadgetry as to forget the necessity for the human approach in our relationship with patients.

Patients come to our hospitals expecting to be cared for and hoping to be cured fast. They are also more prone to emotional stress and anxiety. No doubt the quality of our diagnostic and treatment skills must be of the highest order to instill confidence and minimise the anxiety of patients and relatives. But I think it is equally important for our medical personnel to balance their clinical efficiency with a touch of human kindness. It is not enough to know who is occupying which bed and suffering from what disease. In a nutshell, doctors, nurses and all those involved in patient care should realise that they are dealing with the patient, his family and, indeed, his whole life!

In this context, it is apt for us to look at the theme of this year's Courtesy Campaign, which is "Courtesy and Social Responsibility". At work, this means taking a total view of the patient's situation, that is understanding the patient's medical, social and personal

problems. This may extend to showing sensitivity and consideration for their families and their predicament. It is gratifying to note from the feedback received from the public that there were 13 per cent more letters of appreciation in 1982 than in 1981 and the number of complaints was three per cent less in 1982 than in 1981. While statistics show that we are doing well, let us continue to improve on our services with or without the campaign.

Our medical and nursing personnel have ample opportunities to be of service to their neighbours or society in general. Because of their training they can be of assistance to a neighbour who needs prompt or simple medical or nursing attention. Similarly, they could offer their professional services to any organised community work within their neighbourhood.

Equally important is to be conscious and care for the welfare of your working colleagues, especially those in need of help. This will create a more congenial workplace and enhance job satisfaction.

It has been suggested (in the USA) that "the best way to humanise doctors (and I would add, nurses) is to humanise their training". As a former teacher myself, I would subscribe to this viewpoint. However, I would add that if we want our students to learn the right things, we as teachers, superiors or administrators, must show the way and provide the inspiration. This is where I think the patient-management style of our Heads of Units, medical or nursing administrators will go a long way to nurture the conduct and behaviour of their staff.

I must say it is most gratifying to see the considerable enthusiasm shown by our staff to the various courtesy activities and competitions organised at the institutional or Headquarters' level. While the courtesy message comes through clearly and sometimes amusingly, in the poems, skits and operetta, I would like to urge you to let it permeate into your everyday life and action.

I wish you an enjoyable evening.

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