

Singapore Government **PRESS RELEASE**

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**SPEECH BY MR HOWE YOON CHONG, MINISTER FOR HEALTH, AT THE
PRESENTATION OF AWARDS TO CHAMPION BLOOD DONORS AT THE
SCHOOL OF NURSING AUDITORIUM, SINGAPORE GENERAL HOSPITAL
ON FRIDAY, 29 APRIL 1983 AT 6.00 PM**

You and thousands of Singaporeans like you who come regularly and voluntarily to donate blood indeed do us proud. The Ministry of Health, particularly the Blood Transfusion Service, would like to say on behalf of all Singaporeans "Thank You".

To my mind every blood donor is a living proof that there are still many Singaporeans who while enjoying the rights and privileges of citizens, understand that they also have obligations and responsibilities. By donating blood, you help those in need and you also discharge part of your duty to the community. You should feel a sense of satisfaction in having helped a fellow citizen in need. For all you know your contribution may have saved his or her life.

Our Blood Transfusion Service has for more than 20 years worked on the voluntary donation system. Though blood transfusion needs keep increasing, this system has responded well to meet every demand. We hope to have sufficient numbers of public-spirited people coming forward to donate blood.

Blood has become a crucial part of modern medical treatment and with further advances in medical science and technology blood will be given new roles to play in corrective and preventive medicine. Unless we keep recruiting more donors, we cannot maintain adequate stocks

to satisfy future demands. We would like every donor to help spread the message that with the precautions taken by the Blood Transfusion Service no one suffers any harmful or ill effects by donating blood; rather it is a noble act that can save lives.

Let me quote you some figures. About 430 ml of blood is drawn at one blood donation. On average, blood donors make about 1.5 donations per year. Blood services generally aim at a target of at least 2 blood donations per donor per year. Singapore's donation to population ratio is about 24.8 donations per 1,000 population. In highly developed countries this ratio is much higher - between 33 to 80 per 1,000 population.

Hospitals use about 150 units of blood per day. The present blood collection is just able to meet normal demands with a little to spare. The margin for reserve stock however needs to be increased to meet emergencies.

In 1982 for instance, 59,711 units of blood were collected, which is an all time record. 53,408 blood transfusions were administered in hospitals in the same period.

Government hospitals used up 90 per cent of the blood supply; the remaining 10 per cent went to private hospitals. In respect of the quantity used in Government hospitals, 82.3 per cent went to 'C' class patients and 17.7 per cent to the paying patients.

Who are our donors? They came from all walks of life. A very encouraging trend is that more younger Singaporeans are participating actively in blood donation. Our national servicemen continue to make the major contributions. One-third of last year's blood collection came from the Singapore Armed Forces. The National University of Singapore topped the list of non-uniformed

groups last year with 719 donations. Various other groups from factories, offices, and not to forget our own nurses themselves, and thousands of individuals like you regularly come forward to donate blood.

Over the past 10 years, almost seven per cent of our population or in actual numbers 168,844 people have registered as blood donors. The Blood Transfusion Service will work hard to increase this number. It will welcome more of our people to make a commitment to donate blood regularly. The public spirit that you have shown is an excellent example for others to follow and the Blood Transfusion Service is very much gratified and encouraged by your continuing support. It is only when we have a sufficient number of regular blood donors that we can ensure that all patients in our hospitals who need blood will not have to worry because they can count on you and on many others to help them in their hour of need.

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