

Singapore Government

PRESS RELEASE

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84-PRL-14

Release No.: 03/SEP
05-4/84/09/01

SPEECH BY MR PHUA BAH LEE, SENIOR PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY
(DEFENCE), AT THE OPENING OF ANTI-CANCER WEEK
AT CENTRE POINT (ORCHARD ROAD)
ON SATURDAY, 1 SEPTEMBER 1984 AT 3.00 PM

You may wonder why I should be here as the Guest-of-Honour. What have I got to do with cancer? Coming from the Ministry of Defence, I am very conscious of the need to maintain and promote the health of our soldiers. Our soldiers are also our citizens since the major part of the Singapore Armed Forces are citizen-soldiers, namely the reservists. So I am here to represent the ordinary man-in-the-street who wants to take good care of his health. Health is wealth, some people say. How very true!

The Singapore Cancer Society is celebrating its 20th anniversary. The Society has had a 20-year record of dedicated service to the community. And it is fitting that they should decide to celebrate this special occasion through greater service.

Cancer research will be given a further boost by the Cancer Research Development Programme. Prominent professors and experts will be invited to come and teach our young scientists, who can then be sent to work under these professors in their own institutions overseas.

At the same time, more financial grants will be given for cancer research. I am also glad to note that attempts are now being made to raise funds to purchase an expensive piece of equipment to be donated to the Singapore General Hospital for further research on cancer treatment. This machine costs S\$800,000/-, and I would like to join the Society in appealing for public support to raise this sum.

Public education to dispel people's fear of cancer is also important. This multi-media campaign, including the travelling exhibition, is a commendable effort. We should study carefully the information and guidance given in the exhibits; understand them, and put them to practice.

Know the eight Warning Signs of Cancer. Early detection means early treatment. And early treatment can save our lives.

During my meet-the-people sessions, some mothers tell me of their worries about their sons who are in National Service picking up the habit of smoking cigarettes. They were non-smokers before. Probably they have developed the habit through close association with cigarette-smoking peers. But the SAP certainly does not encourage smoking and many if not most senior commanders do not smoke.

Another point I would like to bring up is that although the promotion of sales of cigarettes by commercial advertisements has been banned by Government nevertheless the sale of tobacco and cigarettes has gone up. It would appear therefore that much more effort and other measures are needed to discourage people from smoking especially among our young people who have not yet picked up the habit. This is because smoking is not only an important cause of cancer; it is also strongly associated with heart and lung diseases.

The unfortunate victims of cancer as well as their family members need help and support. The Cancer Society has a Welfare Committee and other rehabilitative programmes to help such people. Money is not the only need. People who care are more important. Volunteers are needed to come forward to help. The Cancer Society is not resting on its laurels. It wants to do more. Let us give the Society the support so that it can help us in time of need. Thus, it is with great pleasure that I declare open this Anti-Cancer Week held in conjunction with the Society's 20th anniversary.

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