

## Press Release

### For Immediate Release

23 September 2015

# NEW SUPPORT GROUP FOR LYMPHOMA PATIENTS AND CAREGIVERS

*Public healthcare institutions and non-government organisations collaborate to launch a new support group as Singapore observes its first World Lymphoma Awareness Day*

SINGAPORE - According to the Singapore Cancer Registry, between 2010 and 2014, lymphoid neoplasms or lymphoma was the fifth and sixth most commonly occurring cancer in Singaporean men and women respectively<sup>1</sup>. During the same period, over 3,400 Singaporeans were diagnosed with the disease.

As cancer patients, survivors and their families will tell you, being diagnosed with cancer is a life-changing event. From the point of diagnosis, many patients and even their loved ones experience feelings of shock, anger, fear, denial and a myriad of other emotions. Understandably, these emotions can be very difficult to deal with. The cancer journey is certainly not easy for anyone.

Support groups have come to play a very important role, especially in helping newly diagnosed patients and their families. Such groups are a key source of information and comfort, enabling anyone affected by cancer to come together to share common concerns and experiences. Besides lending a listening ear, members of such groups have also been known to become pillars of support and encouragement for one another. "Many of our patients have told us that speaking to someone who has "been there and done that" definitely makes their journey less daunting and uncertain," said Dr Michelle Poon, Chairman of the Lymphoma Cancer Awareness Organising Committee 2015 and Consultant, Department of Haematology-Oncology, National University Cancer Institute, Singapore (NCIS).

Ms Erma Maulood, who was diagnosed with Stage 2 Non-Hodgkin Lymphoma (NHL), had her fears and reservations, having seen her friend with cancer suffer during treatment. "Fortunately, not only do I have the support of my family and loved ones, I also found comfort and hope in The Lymphoma Club after reading about other lymphoma patients' journeys and how they overcame the disease. I also sought solace in patients in the same ward and as much as possible, tried to befriend them and rally a positive state of mind." NHL is a type of blood cancer that starts in cells called lymphocytes, which are part of the body's immune system.

Building on the present patient support network of the Leukemia and Lymphoma Foundation (LLF), the NCIS, the National Cancer Centre Singapore (NCCS), the

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<sup>1</sup> Singapore Cancer Registry, Interim Annual Report, Trends in Cancer Incidence in Singapore 2010-2014

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Singapore General Hospital (SGH) and the Singapore Cancer Society (SCS) have come together in collaboration to launch a support group for lymphoma patients, survivors and their families across Singapore. The objectives are to help patients and survivors share their experiences of battling the disease and to lend support to one another through the difficult journey.

Led by LLF and supported by the various partners, such a support group, will hopefully be able to achieve these objectives through not just formal events, but also informal activities and regular gatherings for both patients and their families. These will include weekly walks, bowling sessions and visits to some of the attractions such as the Zoological Gardens, Universal Studios and Gardens by the Bay.

This lymphoma support group will be officially launched on 26 September 2015 at the multilingual public symposium on lymphoma, held in conjunction with the World Lymphoma Awareness Day (WLAD). WLAD is a day dedicated to raising awareness of lymphoma, and is commemorated internationally on 15 September annually. This will be the first year that WLAD is observed in Singapore in order to raise public awareness about lymphoma.

The public symposium will cover topics such as the risks of getting lymphoma, the signs and symptoms of the cancer, treatment options and more. Not only do we aim to raise awareness of this disease, we also hope to better equip the public with knowledge about the disease so that symptoms can be detected as early as possible. This can lead to early diagnosis and treatment, thus enabling a better chance of recovery for the patients.

To find out more about the programme and other details about the symposium, please refer to **Annex A**.

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### **About the National University Cancer Institute, Singapore ([www.ncis.com.sg](http://www.ncis.com.sg))**

The National University Cancer Institute, Singapore (NCIS) offers a broad spectrum of cancer care and management covering both paediatric and adult cancers, with expertise in prevention, screening, diagnosis, treatment, rehabilitation and palliative care. The Institute's strength lies in the multi-disciplinary approach taken to develop a comprehensive and personalised plan for each cancer patient and his or her family. NCIS draws on the expertise of its specialists in the fields of haematology-oncology, radiation oncology, gynaecologic oncology, paediatric oncology, surgical oncology, oncology nursing, oncology pharmacy, palliative care, pathology, radiology, medical specialties including gastroenterology and hepatology, infectious diseases, pulmonary and critical care, psychiatry, epidemiology and public health as well as other allied health sciences. NCIS's strength in research allows patients to access drugs and devices before they are commercially available. NCIS is also closely affiliated with the Cancer Science Institute of Singapore, National University of Singapore. NCIS is a member of the National University Health System (NUHS).

### **About the Leukemia & Lymphoma Foundation ([www.llf.org.sg](http://www.llf.org.sg))**

Leukemia and Lymphoma Foundation is a registered charity with IPC status, set up in 2003 to support and improve the quality of life of patients and their families. The Foundation has been providing funding subsidies for the treatment of needy patients, counseling support to patients and their families as they go through this difficult period of their lives. All donations to Leukemia and Lymphoma Foundation are tax-exempt and go towards treatment cost of patients with leukemia, lymphoma and related blood diseases.

### **About National Cancer Centre Singapore ([www.nccs.com.sg](http://www.nccs.com.sg))**

National Cancer Centre Singapore (NCCS) provides a holistic and multidisciplinary approach to cancer treatment and patient care. We treat almost 70 per cent of the public sector oncology cases, and they are benefiting from the sub-specialisation of our clinical oncologists. NCCS is also accredited by the US-based Joint Commission International for its quality patient care and safety.

To deliver among the best in cancer treatment and care, our clinicians work closely with our scientists who conduct robust cutting-edge clinical and translational research programmes which have been internationally recognised. NCCS strives to be a global leading cancer centre, and shares its expertise and knowledge by offering training to local and overseas medical professionals.

### **About Singapore Cancer Society ([www.singaporecancersociety.org.sg](http://www.singaporecancersociety.org.sg))**

Established in 1964, Singapore Cancer Society is a self-funded voluntary welfare organisation which provides patient care services to needy cancer patients through its welfare, hospice home care, cancer treatment subsidy and rehabilitation support

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programmes. In addition, the Society also provides free cancer screening services and promotes cancer awareness and prevention through its public education and community outreach programmes.

### **About Singapore General Hospital ([www.sgh.com.sg](http://www.sgh.com.sg))**

Singapore General Hospital, a member of Singapore Health Services, is the public sector's flagship hospital. Established in 1821, SGH is Singapore's largest acute tertiary hospital with 1,600 beds and national referral centre offering a comprehensive range of 36 clinical specialties on its campus. Every year, about 1 million Singaporeans benefit from advanced medical care delivered by its 800 specialists. As an academic healthcare institution and the bedrock of medical education, SGH plays a key role in nurturing doctors, nurses and allied health professionals, and is committed to innovative translational and clinical research in her continual strive to provide the best care and outcomes to her patients.

SGH Department of Haematology provides both clinical and laboratory services for the diagnosis and treatment of all blood and blood related disorders. Patients with lymphoma are cared for by a multidisciplinary team of doctors and bone marrow transplant specialist, oncology-trained nurses, pharmacists, physiotherapists and allied health professionals at a dedicated clinic within the Haematology and Transplant Centre.

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### Annex A



# Inaugural World Lymphoma Awareness Day 2015

Gaining ~~Knowledge~~<sup>node</sup>  
Understanding  ymphoma

**26  
September  
(Saturday)**

<b>Lymphoma Symposium 2015</b>	<b>Simposium Hari Lymphoma Sedunia 2015</b>	<b>世界淋巴瘤日 公众讲座2015</b>
English   10am - 12pm	Melayu   10am - 12pm	中文   1pm - 3pm
<p><b>Cancer - The Singapore story</b> Dr Michelle Poon Consultant Dept of Haematology-Oncology, NCIS</p> <p><b>Lymphoma - What is there to know?</b> A/Prof Lim Soon Thye Head/ Senior Consultant Division of Medical Oncology, NCCS</p> <p><b>"Eat to live or live to eat?"</b> Ms Esther Lin Senior Dietitian, NUH</p> <p><b>"Let me tell you all about it"</b> Patient sharing</p> <p><b>Question &amp; Answer</b></p>	<p><b>Lymphoma - Apa yang anda perlu tahu?</b> Dr Mohamad Farid Pakar Perunding, NCCS</p> <p><b>"Makan untuk hidup dan hidup untuk makan?"</b> Ms Wong Wei Yee Pakar Diet, NUH</p> <p><b>Pengalaman seorang pesakit</b></p> <p><b>Sesi Soal dan Jawab</b></p>	<p><b>开幕致词</b> 方丽梅医生 顾问医生, 肿瘤血液科 新加坡国立大学癌症中心</p> <p><b>淋巴瘤, 你知多少?</b> 方丽梅医生 顾问医生, 肿瘤血液科 新加坡国立大学癌症中心</p> <p>李裕贤医生 顾问医生, 血液科 新加坡中央医院</p> <p><b>与癌共舞一位淋巴瘤病患的抗癌之旅</b> 受邀病人</p> <p><b>问答时间</b></p>
<b>\$5 per session! Hurry! Registration closes on 23 Sept!</b>		
<p><b>Venue 地点 Tempat</b> NUHS Tower Block (1E Kent Ridge Road) Nearest MRT Station: Kent Ridge</p>		<p><b>Registration 登记 Pendaftaran</b> Sistic: <a href="http://www.sistic.com.sg/events/clymphoma0915">http://www.sistic.com.sg/events/clymphoma0915</a> Enquiries: <a href="mailto:ncis_events@nuhs.edu.sg">ncis_events@nuhs.edu.sg</a></p>

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