

***Embargoed for release on 6 April 2006, 5pm***



**6 April 2006**

## **The Singapore Hospice Council and Lien Foundation collaborate on \$2m project to help the dying**

***Project to raise public awareness and attract more doctors and nurses into hospice palliative care***

1. The Singapore Hospice Council (SHC) is working in partnership with the Lien Foundation to create the first-ever doctors' and nurses' palliative care fellowships and scholarships in Singapore<sup>1</sup> and launch an inaugural campaign to raise public awareness of hospice palliative care in Singapore. Of the \$2m funding provided by the Lien Foundation to the SHC, \$1.2m will go to the scholarships and fellowships, and the other \$800,000 to public awareness efforts.
2. "We are very heartened by Lien Foundation's support for the 'cause of the dying'. About 70% of people with terminal illnesses are dying without hospice palliative care in Singapore. Our survey last March showed that more than two-thirds of the public did not know about hospice care. However, this does not mean an apathetic public. Almost all surveyed expressed a desire for more information on hospice palliative care," said Dr Chen Ai Ju, Chairman, SHC.
3. "The Lien Foundation strongly believes in the growing need for hospice palliative care in Singapore. One of our goals as a foundation is to "play catalyst" and ignite action to deal with gaps and unmet

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<sup>1</sup> Hospice palliative care offers medical care, emotional, psychosocial and practical support to individuals with terminal illnesses.

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needs in our society,” said Mrs Margaret Lien, Governor, Lien Foundation. “We hope that through this project, Singaporeans will realize that help is available, pain can be managed, and by not shunning death, many can celebrate the final moments of life together with their loved ones.”

4. The SHC-Lien Foundation project is timely as Singapore faces a rapidly aging population and shortage of professionals trained in hospice palliative care. The \$1.2m fund for scholarships/fellowships aims to help stem Singapore’s current shortage of palliative care specialists and offer doctors and nurses formal training opportunities in this area. In addition, the fund hopes to attract more doctors and nurses to pursue palliative care as a career. In view of Singapore’s position as a medical hub, the SHC and Lien Foundation are also offering fellowships to doctors in the Asia Pacific, thereby contributing to the training of professionals in the region, and raising the overall standard of palliative care.
5. The scholarships and fellowships in palliative care will train ten local doctors, 20 local nurses, and 20 doctors in the Asia Pacific region over a period of 5 years. Successful candidates will undergo training to receive the Graduate Certificate I (Palliative Care) offered for the first time by the National Cancer Centre Singapore (NCCS) and Flinders University of South Australia.
6. The fellowships and scholarships are:
  - **The Lien Foundation – Singapore Hospice Council Palliative Care Local Doctors Scholarship**
  - **The Lien Foundation - Singapore Hospice Council Palliative Care Nursing Scholarship**
  - **The Lien Foundation – Asia Pacific Hospice Palliative Care Network (APHN) Doctors Fellowship**

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More information is available on [www.singaporehospice.org.sg](http://www.singaporehospice.org.sg) (see annex for more details)

7. This effort complements the public awareness campaign that the Lien Foundation and SHC will be launching soon. The campaign aims to increase Singaporeans' awareness of hospice palliative care and end-of-life issues, and to face them without fear or stigma. There is a latent and pressing need for more information and help in this area as Singapore's population ages and family size shrinks. More and more individuals will face the growing load of caring for the elderly and terminally-ill. These caregivers would be a focal point of the campaign as hospice palliative care is not only for the dying but also for the living.
8. The SHC-Lien Foundation project is managed by a special committee of the SHC chaired by Dr. Seet Ai Mee, President, HCA Hospice Care, with representation from various SHC members.

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[About the Singapore Hospice Council](#)

[www.singaporehospice.org.sg](http://www.singaporehospice.org.sg)

The Singapore Hospice Council (SHC) is an umbrella body incorporating all voluntary organisations actively providing hospice care in Singapore. The Council is committed to improving the lives of patients with serious life-threatening illness and to support their loved ones.

Members of SHC are: Assisi Home and Hospice, Bright Vision Hospital, Dover Park Hospice, HCA Hospice Care, Methodist Hospice Fellowship, Metta Hospice Care, Singapore Cancer Society, and St Joseph's Home and Hospice.

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## **ANNEX**

### **1 Lien Foundation-SHC Palliative Care Medical Scholarship**

- The Lien Foundation will be funding two scholarships per year.
- Practising doctors who are Singapore Citizens or Permanent Residents are eligible to apply for the scholarship.
- Course fee is S\$10,000. Sponsorship funding from SHC-Lien Foundation is S\$8,000. The remaining S\$2,000 shall be borne by the selected doctor individually.

#### **Terms and conditions of the Scholarship**

The recipient of the scholarship will be required to:

- be sponsored for the Scholarship by a local hospice/palliative care organization.
- successfully complete the Course.
- commit to work an average of two hours per week for two years in a palliative care setting. A total of 208 hours will be required over a period of two years from the beginning of the Course, either on a voluntary or paid basis.
- submit a report at the end of the one-year Course and at the end of the two-year period of obligation.

### **2 Lien Foundation-SHC Palliative Care Nursing Scholarship**

- The Lien Foundation will be funding four scholarships per year.
- Registered Nurses who are Singapore Citizens or Permanent Residents are eligible to apply for the scholarships.
- Course fee is S\$10,000. Sponsorship funding from SHC-Lien Foundation is \$5,000. The remaining \$5,000 shall be borne by the nurses' employers.

#### **Terms and conditions of the Scholarship**

The recipient of the scholarship will be required to:

- successfully complete the course.
- be bonded for one year to work in a palliative care setting upon completion of the one year course.
- submit a report at the end of the Course and at the end of the one-year period of obligation.

### **3 Lien Foundation-APHN Palliative Care Fellowship (for doctors in the Asia Pacific region)**

The Lien Foundation will be funding up to four fellowships per year. The fellowship will be offered to selected doctors to be employed on a two year contract with a local palliative care/hospice organisation. The SHC-Lien Foundation Fellowship funding includes:

- Course fee S\$10,000

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- Return economy travel expenses S\$1,000
- Monthly stipend of S\$2,500 for the first year
- Annual allowance of S\$6,000 to include housing, medical registration, malpractice insurance, hospitalisation insurance and outpatient medical/dental benefits

The monthly stipend of S\$2,500 and annual allowance of S\$6,000 for the second year of the Fellowship will be borne by the local hospice employer.

**Terms and conditions of the Fellowship**

Recipients of the Fellowship are required to:

- apply successfully for registration with the Singapore Medical Council to practise medicine in Singapore under supervision.
- be employed by a Singapore hospice organisation.
- successfully complete the Course.
- successfully complete the 2-year full-time Fellowship programme with a local hospice employer.
- submit two annual reports on experience in the Fellowship programme including recommendations on improving the scheme.

**4 About the Graduate Certificate I (Palliative Care)**

The Graduate Certificate I (Palliative Care) is a specially designed one-year part-time course of Flinders University, jointly run by the Department of Palliative Medicine of the National Cancer Centre Singapore (NCCS) and the Department of Palliative and Supportive Services, Flinders University, Adelaide.

Candidates will participate in distance learning, and attend two 2-week intensive training at the NCCS and one 4-week clinical attachment at an accredited palliative care facility during the course of one year.

On completion of this course candidates will be awarded the Graduate Certificate I (Palliative Care) by Flinders University. If candidates wish to pursue further studies, credits from this course can go towards other Graduate Diploma or Masters programs offered by Flinders University and other universities.