

# Reactions to the Prime Minister's National Day Rally comments on healthcare by community leaders

“ To place more emphasis on step-down care facilities is the mark of a maturing healthcare system. We must not forget that Intermediate and Long-term Care facilities are an essential part of the healthcare system, and need to be integrated with acute care. This will hopefully change the view of many in the public, who tend to associate them with inferior, poor, or worse still, no care. ”

Dr Angel Lee, Tan Tock Seng Hospital

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“ With the upcoming silver tsunami, my hope is that we will have a healthcare system that will allow the elderly who are at risk and susceptible, to move seamlessly from one level of care to another depending on their needs without having to face differing levels of subsidy and charges.

The healthcare team that works tirelessly in the continuum of care called intermediate and long-term care institutions, needs to be recognised, trained and rewarded just as the others in the non VWO sector. Only then can this sector be sustainable and grow to provide the highest standard of care for the needy elderly. ”

Dr Kalaimamani, Ren Ci Hospital

“ Moving from fast medicine to ‘slow medicine’ needs a change of gear. This needs to be done well until it is like an automatic gear shift. Otherwise, it is a terrible jolt and the engine may die. It is indeed timely that our nation is rallied to apply our passion and energy to address this very important issue, as the need for ‘slow medicine’ increases with our aging population. My hope is that healthcare workers, regardless of training, sector or cluster, will unite to meet this challenge. ”

A/Prof Lee Kheng Hock, Department of Family Medicine and  
Continuing Care, Singapore General Hospital

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“ It is unfortunate that the term ‘Slow Medicine’ has been used. I hope it will not get entrenched. It is actually used for ‘less aggressive care at the end of life’.

I would have preferred ‘Humane’ or ‘Holistic Medicine’, which seeks to integrate clinical, social and psychological aspects of care to manage the whole person. The key words in our usual jargon are ‘TLC – tender loving care’. The community hospital should aim to restore patients to such a level of health and function that would enable them to lead reasonably comfortable and independent lives. ”

Dr Lee Hin Peng, Chairman, St Luke's Eldercare

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“ The centre of gravity of healthcare will shift from the acute care hospitals to the community and primary care sectors. Our healthcare system will need to undergo a radical transformation in terms of delivery models, financing and incentives/ disincentives so that patients with chronic medical problems can be better, and more cost-effectively cared for by their primary care physician working with a team of other healthcare professionals. Patients too must become a lot more empowered so that they can make the right choices for themselves. This transformation will probably take many years to come about, and the medical profession needs to take the lead in this revolution. ”

Dr Jason Cheah, CEO, AIC

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“ ‘Slow Medicine’ is about better communication with older people and their families, understanding their goals and expectations and giving meaning to the treatment we offer. We walk with them in their journey, not pushing what we think is best for them, but offering options, guiding and helping them along the paths they choose. It is about ‘adding life to years, not years to life’. ”

Dr Pang Weng Sun, Chairman, Medical Board, Alexandra Hospital