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VICE-CHAIRMAN OF GPC (HEALTH),  
AT SINGAPORE RED CROSS WORLD FIRST AID DAY CELEBRATION, 14 SEPT  
2013, SRC ACADEMY@ATRIUM**

**Ladies and Gentlemen**

**Friends of the Singapore Red Cross**

**Good morning**

**I am happy to be here today with everyone to commemorate World First Aid Day. It is an occasion for Red Cross and Red Crescent national societies all over the world to raise public awareness of the importance of acquiring first aid knowledge and first aid skills. Even in an urban setting like Singapore, where medical help is readily available, it is very important that we arm ourselves with such skills.**

**First Aid: Initial Assistance and Care delivered to the sick and injured**

**The first recorded history of first aid goes back a long way.... 1099**

**Since then it is often spoken of during war times and times of conflict, where first aid was administered in the battle field. During the 1860s, The First Geneva Convention and the First Int Red Cross came into being to help protect and deal with issues related to managing the sick and injured soldiers and casualties, on the battle field**

**In 1878, First Aid spread widely in Britain. It was thought to have been derived from the terms “ first treatment” and “ national aid”, put together . Since then first aid has spiralled very quickly into importance and there have been refinement and review over the years to include more practices which have become accepted such as the inclusion of CPR and even use of AED by trained laypersons and first aiders today in some societies**

**The SRC was founded 30 Sept 1949 and it was incorporated into an Act by parliament in April 1973. The SRC is affiliated with the Int federation of the Red Cross and it adheres to**

the Geneva Convention, whereby it upholds humanity, impartiality, independence and neutrality, as well as unity and universality

The Singapore Red Cross has been in the forefront of the national efforts of having “*a first aider in every home*”. It has been constantly innovating and modifying its first aid courses to meet specific societal needs e.g., they do have customized courses like the Standard First Aid course, CPR, Workplace First Aid and Child First Aid. These courses have been met with good response, with over 35,000 people successfully completing them in the past five years.

In line with its goal to have *one first aider in every home*, indeed, first aid learning should be available to everyone. The Singapore Red Cross Academy’s first aid classes have been subsidized through fundraising efforts. This has enabled SRC to also run free first aid workshops and talks in the heartlands and in schools, which helps to extend the priceless gift of lifesaving knowledge to the community. These efforts are laudable, especially since they are done in fulfillment of the Red Cross’ mission of relieving suffering, protecting lives and dignity, and responding to emergencies.

Today, we launch a series of first aid courses for caregivers of the vulnerable people, namely the Elderly, Diabetic and Stroke patients. These new courses seek to empower caregivers with life saving skills and contribute to the nationwide effort of enhancing community resilience. Caregivers and family members attending these courses can tap on the Caregivers Training Grant administered by the Agency for Integrated Care (AIC). The grant provides care recipients with a \$200 subsidy each year for their caregivers to receive training to better meet their physical, social and emotional needs. These skills can be useful for many families and I encourage all caregivers to find out more about such courses from AIC's Silver Pages.

Ladies and gentlemen, by 2030, one in five Singaporeans would be above the age of 65. This poses many challenges. The government has a policy framework and many initiatives that enable Singaporeans to age gracefully and with dignity. The SRC also

**runs the Eldercare First Aid course to help address the concerns arising from an aging population.**

**We are scaling up health and aged care infrastructure and services vital to address the increased healthcare needs of seniors. But at the same time we need to empower caregivers with the necessary skills that are imperative for a resilient health and aged care system. This will help caregivers to minimize risks to those in their care, as well as, manage emergencies.**

**It is wonderful to see that each one of you has proactively taken the first step to gain these first aid skills. They will not only benefit you and your loved ones, but the community at large. Congratulations - you are the first cohort. I hope that you will also be an advocate in your respective families and communities, influencing more people to get trained and be ready for emergencies.**

**I wish you an enjoyable and fruitful lesson.**

**Finally, there is much more work to do, more to help , more to train in order for us to make significant impacts on societies. E.g. our OHCA rate have in the last decade continue to remain at 2-3 %**

**Perhaps as we strive to promote kindness, graciousness and greater level of volunteerism in society, then more impact will start to become apparent.**

**To all first aiders, Continue to do what you have to do for indeed, serving humanity is indeed the best work of life**

**Happy World First Aid Day.**