



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
SINGAPORE, 29 JULY 2003**

**HEALTH SCIENCES AUTHORITY
PRESS RELEASE**

SINGAPORE AND AUSTRALIA FORGE STRATEGIC ALLIANCE IN FORENSIC MEDICINE

Singapore's Health Sciences Authority [HSA] and its Australian counterpart in forensic medicine, the Victorian Institute of Forensic Medicine [VIFM], signs a Memorandum of Understanding [MOU], to further strengthen the strategic co-operation between the two agencies.

2 Today's signing of the HSA-VIFM MOU, which is officiated by Mr Giam Chin Toon, HSA Board member, will facilitate and enhance reciprocal exchanges of information and resources, development of professional competencies and scientific collaborations between the two centres of excellence.

3 On the investigative front, the role of the HSA, through its Centre for Forensic Medicine [CFM], is to apply forensic medicine / forensic pathology and related science to serve the administration of justice and enhance safety in the community. As national agencies, both HSA and VIFM provide a comprehensive range of forensic, medical and scientific services.

4 The challenges of a modern society have seen the increasing role of forensic pathology expertise in enhancing safety in the community. Over the years, forensic pathology has made breakthroughs in areas of road safety and toy safety to enhance safety in the community. In the globalised world, the need for the forensic community to collaborate and learn from each other becomes more important. Events and incidents can transcend geographical boundaries. Each forensic pathologist is exposed to a narrow range of cases scoped by the community in which he practices. A collaboration such as this MOU provides the structure for a more formal win-win partnership between HSA and VIFM. The MOU will promote stronger mutual professional ties useful for crisis response. It will also facilitate the sharing of expertise and practices so that lessons of public safety can be learnt and shared, which will in turn advance the common goal of enhancing safety in the community.

5 As the frontier of medical knowledge and practice advances, it is important to learn from mishaps and failures, so as not only to determine legal liability, but also to act as an important feedback mechanism to prevent future avoidable deaths. While HSA, through CFM, has in the past served to highlight matters of medico-legal importance in medical mishaps, VIFM's work and experience will enable further

exchange of valuable insight, learning and knowledge in a developing area of forensic interest which by nature is itself complex.

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About HSA's Centre for Forensic Medicine

The Centre for Forensic Medicine [CFM] of HSA supports the police and the Coroner for the investigations of deaths that occur suddenly without a known cause of unnatural or suspicious circumstances.

CFM provides forensic pathology consultancy services in the determination of cause of death, as well as clinical forensic medical consultations in living victims of violence, such as in spousal abuse, child abuse and sexual offences. It works with the Ministry of Health in the domain of medical audit in the area of postoperative deaths.

A death certification service is provided to the public through the Police for deaths due to natural diseases occurring at home.

About the Health Sciences Authority

At the Health Sciences Authority [HSA], we apply medical, pharmaceutical and specialised scientific expertise to safeguard public health and safety in Singapore. As one multidisciplinary agency, we serve as the national regulator of all therapeutic products by providing a seamless yet rigorous regulatory process to the healthcare and biomedical sciences industries. We also run the national blood bank, Bloodbank@HSA, protecting the integrity of the nation's blood supply. As the national reference agency, we exploit specialised scientific, forensic, investigative and analytical capabilities in order to serve the administration of justice and enhance safety in our community. For more details, visit www.hsa.gov.sg.