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**HEALTH SCIENCES AUTHORITY
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**1st HSA-NATA JOINT SYMPOSIUM ON
TRANSFUSION MEDICINE & ALTERNATIVES**

**HSA HOSTS 1ST ASIA-PACIFIC NATA SYMPOSIUM ON
TRANSFUSION MEDICINE**

The Health Sciences Authority [HSA] and the Network for the Advancement of Transfusion Alternatives [NATA] have come together to hold the 1st Asia-Pacific Joint Symposium on Transfusion Medicine and Alternatives here in Singapore on 18 and 19 September 2004.

2 Featuring 20 international and local expert speakers from a wide range of clinical specialities, the 2-day symposium to be held in Singapore at the A*STAR Auditorium in Biopolis will cover nearly 30 topics in the following areas:

- blood transfusion safety
- management of anaemia
- coagulation
- reducing homologous transfusion needs
- transfusion practice
- transfusion in paediatrics
- pharmacological alternatives to transfusion
- legal, ethical and economic considerations

3 As an international network of medical practitioners, researchers and opinion leaders from a wide variety of medical and scientific disciplines, NATA is dedicated to providing education in the field of clinical transfusion medicine, with specific focus on the use of transfusion alternatives. The mission and agenda of NATA strongly complements HSA's Centre for Transfusion Medicine's [CTM] purpose and duty in delivering high quality transfusion medicine services for Singapore and in its role as World Health Organisation Collaborating Centre for Transfusion Medicine in the Western Pacific Region.

4 In the last two decades, great strides have been taken towards improving blood supply safety. Initiatives taken at national, regional and international level have contributed in reducing the risks of blood transfusion significantly. Blood supply today is safer than it has ever been. Thus, in many countries, the focus has moved towards transfusion safety rather than blood safety.

5 Despite all efforts, there remains a minimum irreducible risk in every blood transfusion administered. Recognition of this has led to changing transfusion

practices and a more rational and appropriate approach to the use of blood. Advances in clinical care and development of new transfusion alternatives provide options that allow us to avoid homologous blood transfusion altogether.

6 This joint symposium will focus on the medical decision to transfuse blood. Clinical transfusion medicine, as with other medical specialities, moves forward at a rapid pace. Fuelled by worldwide concerns about blood and transfusion safety, new knowledge is accumulated every day to help make us decisions on whether to transfuse, what to transfuse, and how much to transfuse.

7 In his opening address, Professor Satku K, Director of Medical Services, Ministry of Health, will emphasise the importance of clinicians keeping up-to-date on the latest information so as to provide their patients with the best possible clinical care. He says, “As every blood transfusion carries a small but irreducible risk of adverse complication, it is essential that we consider very carefully the risk-benefit of every unit that we choose to transfuse.”

8 About 160 delegates from 15 countries including Singapore are expected to attend the event which will present an excellent opportunity for physicians and caregivers to keep up-to-date on current issues and practices in transfusion medicine.

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A. 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 operate 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.

B. About the Centre for Transfusion Medicine

HSA's Centre for Transfusion Medicine [CTM], which operates the Bloodbank@HSA, is the national agency responsible for collecting, processing, testing and distributing blood and blood products to all hospitals in Singapore, both public and private. As the national blood service, we provide specialised services in transfusion sciences such as immunohaematology and tissue typing. Our transfusion medicine specialists also provide professional advice and consultations to clinicians in Singapore and the region, so as to promote the best practices in clinical transfusion medicine and to ensure that every blood donation is optimally and safely used. For more details, visit www.hsa.gov.sg, select the “CTM” button.

C. About the Network for Advancement of Transfusion Alternatives

Founded in 1998, the Network for Advancement of Transfusion Alternatives [NATA] comprises an international network of medical practitioners, researchers, and opinion leaders from a wide variety of medical and scientific disciplines who are dedicated to helping their peers learn more about recent advances in blood conservation and transfusion alternatives. NATA aims to provide education in the field of transfusion medicine, with a specific focus on transfusion alternatives.