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HEALTH SCIENCES AUTHORITY
NUS SAW SWEE HOCK SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH

1 OCTOBER 2012

HSA AND SAW SWEE HOCK SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH SIGN MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

The Health Sciences Authority (HSA) today signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the National University of Singapore (NUS) Saw Swee Hock School of Public Health (SSHSPH).

2. The MOU signing ceremony between Associate Professor John Lim, Chief Executive Officer of HSA and Professor Chia Kee Seng, Dean, NUS Saw Swee Hock School of Public Health was witnessed by Dr Amy Khor, Minister of State, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Manpower. The ceremony was held in conjunction with the 1st Singapore International Public Health Conference.

3. The MOU seeks to encourage knowledge exchange, enhance academic and professional competencies and develop scientific leadership to promote the protection of public health and the advancement of public health science. It covers four public health domains of epidemiology[1], biostatistics[2], health promotion/education, and health systems and policy. In line with the theme of the 1st Singapore International Public Health Conference, the MOU seeks to also "translate public health research into practice" and advance issues from a global and regional perspective linked to HSA's key areas of focus in regulatory, forensic and analytical science, and transfusion medicine.

4. The areas of cooperation include the following:

a. Participation in joint research projects that are of common research interest such as in the area of pharmacogenomics.

b. Developing of a health information system that enables researchers to analyse health and disease, and policymakers to evaluate the long-

[1] **Epidemiology** is the study of the distribution and patterns of health-events, health-characteristics and their causes or influences in well-defined populations.

[2] **Biostatistics** is the application of statistics to the analysis of biological and medical data.

term outcomes of proposed healthcare and public health policies and interventions.

c. Providing exposure to both SSHSPH students and HSA staff through attachments.

d. Developing and conduct regulatory and/or scientific courses as well as certification programmes to meet national talent needs within regulatory science, blood services and applied science domains and validate the appropriate skill sets.

5. Pharmacogenomics is an area that exemplifies the synergy of HSA and SSHSPH's collaboration. The two organisations have been developing tools to allow comparisons of genetic variation between the main ethnic groups in Singapore - Chinese, Malays and Indians and the other populations from around the world, by using the genetic variation databases which SSHSPH maintains. The team's aim is to develop a user-friendly internet portal to the database in 2013 to enable regulators, clinicians, and scientific researchers to better understand and assess how drug response established in one population or ethnic group might differ in another.

6. By knowing the effect of genes on drug response and metabolism, clinicians can tailor the treatment and drug dose for each individual patient. HSA will also be able to assess the advisability of genetic testing to improve efficacy and safety of treatments, thereby protecting and advancing overall public health.

7. Said Associate Professor John Lim, "This MOU will strengthen the fundamental public health orientation of our work, and supports HSA's aim of advancing thought leadership and innovation in our scientific and regulatory areas of expertise, both locally and globally. By collaborating with SSHSPH in research, teaching and training, we can develop and implement innovative public health solutions relevant to regulatory and analytical science, and transfusion medicine. This fits in well with our established international network of MOU partners and will also help to define key topics for scientific roundtables and research projects under the HSA Academy. I believe this partnership has great potential for building on existing cooperation in areas like pharmacogenomics, as well as exploring new dimensions of regulatory science and public health."

8. "In order to 'translate discovery into healthier communities', SSHSPH will need to work closely with various public health institutions to develop innovative and practical solutions. Our initial interaction in the area of pharmacogenomics has helped us to use our ethnic-specific genomic map to predict potential public health problems of existing and new drugs. It has also provided opportunities for students to pursue their postgraduate training. I am confident that newer areas of collaboration like regulatory science and implementation science will result from this MOU," said Professor Chia Kee Seng.

HEALTH SCIENCES AUTHORITY

About the Health Sciences Authority (HSA)

The Health Sciences Authority (HSA) applies medical, pharmaceutical and scientific expertise through its three professional groups, Health Products Regulation, Blood Services, Applied Sciences, to protect and advance national health and safety. HSA is a multidisciplinary authority. It serves as the national regulator for health products, ensuring they are wisely regulated to meet standards of safety, quality and efficacy. As the national blood service, it is responsible for providing a safe and adequate blood supply. It also applies specialised scientific, forensic, investigative and analytical capabilities in serving the administration of justice. For more details, visit http://www.hsa.gov.sg/ .

For more updates on public health and safety matters, follow us on Twitter at www.twitter.com/HSAsg.

About the NUS Saw Swee Hock School of Public Health (SSHSPH)

Established in October 2011, the Saw Swee Hock School of Public Health builds upon 60 years of experience in research, teaching and practice as a Department of Epidemiology and Public Health. Moving beyond the traditional domains of chronic disease aetiology and risk factors, the SSHSPH emphasizes new technologies and methods to measure and monitor exposure and disease, as well as new approaches to develop and implement public health programmes and policies. With a distinctly Asian focus, SSHSPH's existing strengths include chronic disease epidemiology, statistical genomics and workplace health as well as a well-developed Master of Public Health programme.

For more information, please visit http://www.sph.nus.edu.sg/.