

# Therapists' hands tied helping patients get back on track

Constraints include lack of appropriate infrastructure, resources, survey shows

By LINETTE LAI

THERAPISTS are finding it difficult to ease their patients back into normal life.

Common problems include organisational constraints, scarce community resources and a lack of appropriate infrastructure.

These were the findings from a survey of nearly 200 occupational therapists and physiotherapists from six acute and five community hospitals.

Tan Tock Seng Hospital's principal occupational therapist, Dr Chan Mei Leng, who carried out the survey, said that the hospital setting "allows you enough time to prescribe but, after that, to follow them up properly - that's the other issue".

She revealed the results of the poll at the Singapore Rehabilitation Conference, held last Friday at the Singapore Expo.

Many therapists reported that they have their hands full just making sure their patients - who are often elderly and have various disabilities - are able to cope at home.

But to maintain physical and mental health, seniors must be able to get out and about in the community as well. Dr Chan said that the less a person gets out of the house, the easier it is for him to lose his cognitive function. "Basically, the joy of living is gone," she said.

While hospital therapists know this, many said they rarely have the opportunity to impress this upon patients' families. Said Dr Chan: "If I'm an occupational therapist, I'm going to look at how you are going to go to the market. Are there barriers? You have to train the maid, things like that. It takes time."

Another issue raised in the survey was the lack of community support for patients after their dis-

charge from hospital.

While volunteers can be trained to take them on outings, "you need the professionals to be involved to train the carers", she said. "Bridging this gap is important."

Lastly, therapists surveyed also felt that existing infrastructure is not able to accommodate the needs of the disabled.

Dr Chan warned: "If we are going to keep prescribing wheelchairs but the infrastructure doesn't match up... we are going to have accidents."

linettel@sph.com.sg



Senior principal occupational therapist Natalie Chew at Singapore General Hospital helping a patient. A survey of nearly 200 therapists and physiotherapists says they find it difficult to ease their patients back into normal life. ST FILE PHOTO

## Casino Regulatory Authority to get new chairman

By YEO SAM JO

THE Casino Regulatory Authority (CRA) will get a new chairman from Thursday, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) announced yesterday.

Mr Lee Tzu Yang, who currently serves as the statutory board's deputy chairman, will succeed Mr Richard Magnus, who will retire as chairman after seven years in office.

Thanking Mr Magnus for his contributions, the MHA added that he has played a pivotal role in the development and implementation of Singapore's casino regulatory legislation and framework.

"Under his leadership, Singapore's casino regulatory regime gained international recognition as a robust and effective model that has been referenced by many other jurisdictions," the MHA said.



Mr Lee Tzu Yang (above), will succeed Mr Richard Magnus as CRA chairman.

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Home Affairs, Mr Teo Chee Hean, also thanked Mr Magnus for his "steady leadership" of the CRA during its formative years.

"He has laid the foundations for a casino regulatory framework that is firm and fair," said Mr Teo.

"Beyond Singapore, he has helped CRA build a network of partners and establish itself as a well-respected regulator among its international peers."

Mr Magnus, a former senior district judge, has been the CRA's chairman since it was set up in 2008. He is also chairman of the Public Transport Council, a position he took over from Mr Gerard Ee last May.

His successor at the CRA, Mr Lee, serves as chairman of the Esplanade and the Workplace Safety and Health Council. He was formerly the chairman of Shell Companies in Singapore.

The CRA is tasked with administering and enforcing the Casino Control Act, which was passed in 2006 to regulate casino operators in Singapore and contain the possible harm that casinos might cause to society at large.

Under the Act, all casino operators have to apply to the CRA for approval before commencing operations here.

yeosamjo@sph.com.sg



**YOU WANT A UNIVERSITY AT THE FOREFRONT OF GLOBAL EDUCATION. GO WITH NTU, A UNIVERSITY ON A RAPID RISE GLOBALLY.**

A pioneer of new ways of learning, NTU is driving innovative teaching methods targeted at how young students today acquire knowledge. Here, the iconic architecture isn't just a talking point the world over but is designed to support learning and student interaction. Get a holistic education and experience a vibrant student life on a cosmopolitan campus named one of the top 15 most beautiful universities globally.

Jump-start your future at NTU, the world's No.1 young university.

[www.ntu.edu.sg/admissions](http://www.ntu.edu.sg/admissions)

**RE-DEFINE EDUCATION**

Sunil Ravinder Gill  
Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine

Hiep Hui Min  
Nanyang Business School

Amenda Lio  
School of Art, Design and Media

**TEXT US**

Saw something interesting?  
Or want to air an issue that has been affecting your neighbourhood?



SMS The Straits Times on  
**8282-3343!**