



As the healthcare landscape evolves, Singapore needs a clear strategy, strong leadership and a spirit of innovation to drive the allied health profession forward, said Second Minister for Health Masagos Zulkifli. PHOTO: LIANHE ZAOBAO

National strategy on roles of allied health professionals in the pipeline

It will guide them in handling challenges, improving population outcomes: Masagos

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A national strategy that better carves out the roles that allied health professionals (AHPs) can play in Singapore's evolving

healthcare system is being developed, with more details expected in 2025.

Second Minister for Health Masagos Zulkifli, who is also Minister for Social and Family Development, announced this at an international conference for AHPs on

Nov 1.

Mr Masagos said that as the healthcare landscape evolves, Singapore needs a clear strategy, strong leadership and a spirit of innovation to drive the allied health profession forward.

AHPs, who include occupational therapists, podiatrists and radiographers, play a crucial role alongside doctors and nurses in providing holistic care to patients.

These professionals are being

engaged in the development of the national strategy to help them "play their role in our healthcare system with a common understanding of the focus areas and transformation needed to meet national initiatives such as Healthier SG and Age Well SG", said Mr Masagos.

He added that the strategy will guide AHPs in handling future challenges and improving population outcomes, and more details will be shared when it is firmed up in 2025.

Adjunct Associate Professor Michael Ong, group director of allied health at the National University Health System (NUHS), said that the national allied health strategy will empower professionals like physiotherapists and psychologists to practise at the top of their licence.

"By working to the fullest extent of their abilities, these professionals can make independent clinical decisions and provide timely, effective care as allied health expands into community settings," said Prof Ong.

The conference was attended by about 1,100 professionals and students from over 18 countries. Held at the Max Atria @ Singapore Expo, it was organised by NUHS in partnership with SingHealth and the National Healthcare Group.

In his speech, Mr Masagos said strong leaders are also needed to advance the allied health profession boldly because a strategy is only as good as those who are implementing it.

He highlighted the example of a leadership development strategy for the pharmacy sector designed to nurture leaders who can drive change, navigate challenges and seize opportunities.

There is also a need to cultivate a spirit of innovation in rethinking ways to provide better care.

Mr Masagos cited examples of innovative approaches in allied healthcare, including EatSafe, a national effort led by speech therapists and dietitians to provide a common language by standardising terminology for everyone involved in the care of those with swallowing difficulties.

"These are commendable efforts that have been made in advancing allied health and pharmacy services in Singapore but must be complemented by a strong foundation of education and training for our

professionals, that imbues them with the needed capabilities to manage the challenges of the industry," he said.

To help the professionals grow throughout their careers and improve practice standards of registered AHPs in various sectors, all AHPs will have to meet requirements under a Continuing Professional Education framework from

AHPs, who include occupational therapists, podiatrists and radiographers, play a crucial role alongside doctors and nurses in providing holistic care to patients.

2026. The Government is also raising awareness and promoting allied health professions, especially those smaller in numbers and less known to the public.

In the past five years, Singapore's allied health and pharmacy workforce has grown by 30 per cent, with intakes increased to meet allied health needs, said Mr Masagos.

This included the first batches of dietitians and speech therapists who graduated from the Singapore Institute of Technology in 2023 and 2024 respectively.

"This growth underscores the critical role you play in patient care. These are not just numbers. They signify the capabilities that have been built over time. It is about the impact you make in the lives of Singaporeans every day," said Mr Masagos.

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