

## NATIONAL MEDICAL EXCELLENCE AWARDS 2012

# MOH tackling health-care costs

## Award winner inspired other doctors

By GWENDOLYN NG

**H**EALTH-CARE affordability is one of the key issues the Ministry of Health (MOH) is tackling, said Health Minister Gan Kim Yong yesterday.

He also said that MOH is working out the details for the creation of a Medisave account for each **newborn baby**, with an initial sum to be deposited by the Government.

"This will give Singaporeans greater **peace of mind**," said Mr Gan, who was speaking at the National Medical Excellence Awards (NMEA) 2012 held at the Hilton hotel.

The Medisave move was announced by Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong during the National Day Rally on Sunday.

Mr Gan stressed that the Government will have to work closely with all Singaporeans, health-care professionals and institutions - in both the private and public sectors - to ensure that health care remains of high quality, and is accessible and affordable.

In his speech, Mr Gan also lauded the achievements and contributions of the NMEA award recipients.

He said: "They are the **role models** who will inspire succeeding generations as they strive to achieve tomorrow's excellence."

The national-level awards are an initiative of the National Medical Research Council, set up in 1994 to oversee the development and **advancement** of medical research here.

Mr Gan said: "Accolades like world rankings will pass, but your compassion and concern for the patient will last a lifetime."

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**HELPDESK 我的字典**

**Newborn baby:**  
初生婴儿 chū shēng yīng ér

**Peace of mind:**  
安枕无忧 ān zhěn wú yōu

**Role models:** 榜样 bāng yàng

**Advancement:** 进步 jìn bù

PAEDIATRIC surgeon K. Prabhakaran made history in 1995, when he performed Singapore's first successful paediatric liver transplant. The organ recipient was an 11-year-old girl, who would go on to live a normal life.

Fourteen years later, Professor Prabhakaran saw his former patient again, during her wedding in 2009.

Said the 62-year-old head of the paediatric-surgery department at the National University Hospital (NUH): "If she hadn't undergone the liver transplant, she wouldn't have survived."

"Watching how our transplant kids grow up, get married and have kids themselves are the sort of things that are satisfying."

Yesterday, the doctor was recognised for his contributions to paediatric surgery over the past two decades.

He was among 10 outstanding clinicians who received accolades at the annual National Medical Excellence Awards (NMEA), now in their fifth year.

Prof Prabhakaran was one of two recipients of the coveted National Outstanding Clinician Award.

The other recipient was Pro-



**PAYING IT FORWARD:** Professor K. Prabhakaran (left) was Associate Professor Lim Tock Han's mentor in 1989. They both received awards yesterday. (PHOTO: JAMIE KOH)

fessor Wong Hee Kit, a trail blazer in the field of orthopaedic surgery, who is from NUH as well.

Prof Prabhakaran also served as a role model to younger doctors such as Associate Professor Lim Tock Han, 47, who received the National Outstanding Clinician Educator Award at the event.

Their paths crossed when Prof Lim underwent a one-month paediatric-surgery rotation in 1989, when he was a houseman at NUH.

Prof Lim said he admired how his mentor, Prof Prabhakaran, shared a close rapport with patients and their families.

He recalled that a young pa-

tient told him: "We call that consultant 'papa'."

Prof Lim, who is assistant chief executive for education and research at the National Healthcare Group, said he is doing his part for the next generation of medical practitioners.

Besides other roles, he is part of a team formed to establish Singapore's third medical school, the Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine, and is helping to recruit doctors to teach there.

He said: "I have benefited from being taught by (senior doctors)... It's a good chance for me to pay it forward."

GWENDOLYN NG



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