



## **HSA AND SRC TEST THEIR BLOOD EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS CAPABILITY**

An emergency blood exercise was held on 27 October 2013 to test the preparedness of the Health Sciences Authority (HSA) and the Singapore Red Cross (SRC) to meet a surge in national blood demand during a civil emergency. The scope of the exercise covered three broad areas – ensuring staff's proficiency in dealing with an emergency blood collection campaign; stress-testing systems in handling a surge in blood collection, processing and distribution activities; and raising public awareness of blood donation. This exercise scenario was an industrial accident during peak hours with many casualties requiring intensive blood support.

2. The one-day intensive collection exercise was held at Bloodbank@HSA, Bloodbank@Dhoby Ghaut, Bloodbank@Woodlands and Bedok Community Centre. SRC mobilised donors and deployed volunteers in various capacities such as triaging, donor care and crowd control during the exercise, while HSA's Blood Services Group (BSG) ramped up its blood collection, testing and processing capacities. Staff strength was doubled and laboratories were run on a 24-hour basis to process two to three times its normal daily capacity of 350-400 units.

3. HSA's emergency preparedness capacity is also boosted by the newly renovated Bloodbank@HSA. With the renovation, donor stations such as registration and medical screening have been optimised for a more efficient and seamless donation process. The donor refreshment area can also be flexibly converted as a holding area to accommodate a surge in blood donors. In an emergency, the upgraded blood bank can be reconfigured and scaled up to receive about 480 blood donations in a day, more than double the normal daily operations. These improvements have raised HSA's capacity to accommodate more donors and increase collection during an emergency. In normal times, the renovated blood bank

provides a warm and friendly ambience, contributing to an overall positive blood donation experience for our donors.

4 Senior Minister of State for Health and Manpower, Dr Amy Khor, who visited the exercise at Bloodbank@HSA, said, “As blood is an important resource needed in normal times and during emergencies, this exercise reinforces the public’s confidence that our national blood supply can be quickly and safely scaled up to help save lives. It also underscores the importance of maintaining both an effective blood service and a population of altruistic blood donors in our healthcare system. This will enable us to respond promptly to support patients in need and cope with any national contingency that we may face.”

5 “This emergency blood exercise demonstrated the seamless collaboration and partnership between HSA’s Blood Services Group and our national donor recruiter, the Singapore Red Cross (SRC). We also appreciate the support of the People’s Association in validating our procedures for converting a community facility into a blood collection centre during an emergency, as well as the Health Promotion Board’s staff who augmented our blood collection team. Most of all, we would like to thank all the blood donors who came forward today and made the exercise a success.” said Assoc Professor John Lim, CEO of HSA.

6 SRC Secretary General Benjamin William added, “While we strive to improve and innovate to make disaster preparedness, mitigation, response and recovery more effective and accountable, the real goal is to develop healthy, safe and resilient communities. This exercise is an extension of our emergency preparedness efforts and we are very heartened by the warm response and support from blood donors and volunteers alike.”

**Health Sciences Authority  
Singapore Red Cross  
27 October 2013**

### **About the Health Sciences Authority**

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](http://www.twitter.com/HSAsg).

The HSA's Blood Services Group, as the national blood service, secures the nation's blood supply by ensuring a safe and adequate blood supply. It is responsible for collecting, processing, testing and distributing blood and blood products to all hospitals in Singapore. It also provides specialist transfusion medicine services in immunohaematology and tissue typing and is actively engaged in the cutting-edge therapeutic research area of cell processing.

### **About the Singapore Red Cross**

The Singapore Red Cross is a homegrown humanitarian organization, dedicated to relieving human suffering, protecting lives and dignity and responding to emergencies since 1949. We serve the vulnerable through our blood donor recruitment programme, home and day activity centre for the disabled, transport aid, food aid, and community first aid, and we build capacity and resilience through our training academy, and volunteer and youth development. Beyond our shores, we mobilise and translate contributions from the donor community to relief and recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts, with the aim of helping communities affected by disasters. For more information, please see [www.redcross.org.sg](http://www.redcross.org.sg)