PRESS RELEASE

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NUS Spearheads New Initiative to Advance Public Health and Healthcare Delivery in Asia

S$17m initiative to focus on research, forums and leadership programmes

The National University of Singapore (NUS) unveiled a new integrative initiative to improve public health and healthcare delivery in Asia. This effort was made possible with a funding of S$17 million over 10 years from the GSK-EDB Trust Fund, which was established as part of the GSK-Singapore 10-year Strategic Roadmap. The setting up of the NUS Initiative to Improve Health in Asia (NIHA) was announced today by Singapore Health Minister Mr Khaw Boon Wan at the East Asia Healthcare Policy Dialogue, a symposium organised at the sidelines of the ASEAN Health Ministers Meeting.

This new initiative aims to make a significant contribution to thinking and policy-formulation in public health and health systems development in Asia, and to elevate Singapore to a leading position in healthcare policy and related research. NIHA will be coordinated by the NUS Global Asia Institute (NUS-GAI), in collaboration with the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine, and the NUS Business School.

Said Professor Tan Chorh Chuan, "The world faces formidable challenges in public health and optimal healthcare delivery. NUS, with the support from the GSK-EDB Trust Fund, is pleased to lead an integrative effort to help address these challenges for Asia, for the future. With active involvement of our policy and research partners in Singapore and across Asia, NIHA has great potential to contribute significantly to the policy and healthcare sector in this part of the world."

NIHA will focus on three key areas, namely research, high-level policy forums and leadership programmes. It will facilitate highly multi-disciplinary collaborative research by experts in the healthcare policy field within NUS, including the Faculties, Schools and Centres of Excellence; and the Duke-NUS Graduate Medical School, as well as other institutions in Singapore and internationally with the relevant expertise, such as the Health Sciences Authority Academy. NIHA's research will have a regional orientation and application.

"Improving health through effective healthcare policies is a major focus for GSK, as we seek ground-breaking ways to address public health issues and contribute to addressing healthcare challenges in the developing world. We believe that the NIHA initiative could contribute significantly to the development of health policies in Asia and are very proud to be associated with this initiative" said Mr Christophe Weber, Senior Vice-President and Regional Director, GlaxoSmithKline Asia Pacific.

"We are delighted that NUS Global Asia Institute is taking the lead to grow Asia's capabilities and talent in addressing the region's unmet healthcare needs. NIHA presents a key platform that enables Singapore to work with our regional partners in co-developing future healthcare solutions today," said Mr Beh Kian Teik, Director, Biomedical Sciences, Singapore Economic Development Board (EDB).

"NIHA reinforces our work at the NUS Global Asia Institute, that is, to bring together existing expertise from NUS and other universities, particularly those with expertise in India and China, to develop solutions that will solve the critical issues for the future in Asia. Healthcare is a critical area of growth in Asia. NIHA will significantly enhance research and education on health policy and healthcare financing, and strategically contribute to improving public health in Asia," said Professor Seetharam Kallidaikurichi E., Director of the NUS Global Asia Institute.

Research

NIHA's research activities will comprise multidisciplinary studies on the medical, economic, social, and ethical issues that influence how healthcare is organised, financed, managed, and delivered. These research activities will be prioritised based on major health challenges relevant to Asia. For instance, an integrative, broad-based approach will be adopted in addressing issues relating to ageing population, health of the ageing workforce and infectious diseases.

NIHA will make available S$1 million in its first grant call scheduled for January 2011 to researchers from across Asia, particularly healthcare experts in China and India, to collaborate with Singapore researchers to study topics such as comparative health systems, financing and preventive care. At least one member of the research team should be from Singapore or based in Singapore. NIHA expects to award its first round of grants of up to $150,000 per proposal in May 2011.

Please refer to Annex 1 for more information on research activities of NIHA.

Forum

NIHA will organise regular high-level Forums on health policy to promote discussion on key health challenges amongst key stakeholders and to identify common issues in health policy within an Asian context. The Forums also aims to foster consensus building and partnerships among key policy makers in Asian governments and industry. The inaugural NIHA Forum is expected to be held in November 2010.

Leadership Programme

NIHA will conduct a fully-funded flagship leadership programme on healthcare policy that will target emerging leaders from government, parliament, civil service, academia and civil society who contribute to health services delivery in Asia and influence health policy. The first programme is scheduled in May 2011.

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About National University of Singapore (NUS)

A leading global university centred in Asia, the National University of Singapore (NUS) is Singapore's flagship university which offers a global approach to education and research, with a focus on Asian perspectives and expertise.

NUS has 14 faculties and schools across three campuses. Its transformative education includes a broad-based curriculum underscored by multi-disciplinary courses and cross-faculty enrichment. Over 30,000 students from 100 countries enrich the community with their diverse social and cultural perspectives.

NUS has three Research Centres of Excellence (RCE) and 22 university-level research institutes and centres. It is also a partner in Singapore's 5th RCE. NUS shares a close affiliation with 16 national-level research institutes and centres. Research activities are strategic and robust, and NUS is well-known for its research strengths in engineering, life sciences and biomedicine, social sciences and natural sciences. It also strives to create a supportive and innovative environment to promote creative enterprise within its community.

For more information, please visit www.nus.edu.sg

ANNEX 1: NUS INITIATIVE TO IMPROVE HEALTH IN ASIA (NIHA) – RESEARCH
ACTIVITIES

NIHA's research activities will include, but not be limited to the following areas:

Comparative Health Systems
- Understanding of current healthcare priorities, as well as healthcare policy and systems in various countries in Asia is an important starting point. It is also very important to appreciate the motivation, philosophy and rationale behind the current systems.

Healthcare Financing
- Public and private insurance
- Risk Pooling
- Hybrid models

Health Economics
- Health technology assessment
- Integrated Healthcare Delivery

Preventive Health Care
- Vaccination
- Nutrition (with particular reference to obesity, type II diabetes, and nutritional assessment and intervention to improve health and reduce cost to healthcare system)
- Diseases affecting Aged (preventive measures vs treatment)
- Coordinated planning and action to prevent or mitigate the impact of epidemics of new infectious diseases
- Role of pharmaceutical and insurance companies in preventive healthcare

Research activities will be prioritised based on major health challenges relevant to Asia.