

Ex-swim star wins healthcare award

Now a skin doctor, he is lauded for efforts to tackle Aids scourge

Audrey Tan and Samantha Boh

Former national swimmer Roy Chan, 60, has won medals for his prowess in the swimming pool, but yesterday he was recognised for his talents out of it.

The skin doctor, who in 1988 founded the charity Action for Aids, was yesterday lauded by Health Minister Gan Kim Yong at an annual awards ceremony that recognised the contributions of healthcare professionals for their work in the field. Professor Chan has been with the National Skin Centre since 1988, and it was his work as a clinician that spurred his desire to help fight Aids and human immuno-deficiency virus (HIV) infection in Singapore. Action for Aids does this through programmes such as its anonymous testing service.

“It is very important to fight the stigma against HIV and Aids because it interferes with control and prevention of the disease,” said Prof Chan, who won the bronze medal at the 1970 Bangkok Asian Games. “People are afraid to get tested for fear of discrimination. It hampers prevention and control methods.”

For his efforts, Prof Chan received the National Outstanding Clinician Award – one of five awards given out by the Health Ministry (MOH) as part of the National Medical Excellence Awards, now in its ninth edition.

Mr Gan gave out awards to a total of four individuals, including Prof Chan, and a team from the National University Hospital and National Healthcare Group Polyclinics. The team of four received the National Clinical Excellence Team Award for its efforts at finding ways to slow down the progression of diabetic kidney disease to end-stage renal failure.

Associate Professor Pang Weng Sun, from the Nanyang Technological University’s Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine, yesterday received the National Outstanding Clinician Educator Award for his work in educating and training clinicians to address the needs of an ageing society. “We need a better understanding of medical illnesses in older people. These are complex and often multiple illnesses in one person, involving physical, mental and psychosocial issues and requiring multiple forms of treatment,” said Prof Pang, who developed an interest in helping the elderly during his visits to nursing homes in Chinatown when he was an undergraduate at the National University of Singapore.

In his speech, Mr Gan said that given its ageing population, Singapore’s healthcare needs will naturally grow. “It is therefore critical for us to transform healthcare delivery to ensure that Singaporeans continue to receive appropriate care and that the system is sustainable in the long-run,” he said.

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Prof Chan’s work as a clinician spurred his desire to help fight Aids and HIV infection in Singapore. In 1988, he started the charity Action for Aids, which offers anonymous testing services, among other programmes. ST PHOTO: JAMIE KOH

HELPING TO FIGHT STIGMA

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PROFESSOR ROY CHAN, who founded the charity Action for Aids. He received the National Outstanding Clinician Award.



TRAINING CLINICIANS

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MEANINGFUL RESEARCH

Research and translating discoveries into the clinics are very meaningful work that have important impact on patients. This type of work must continue.



PROFESSOR CHNG WEE JOO, director and senior consultant at the National University Cancer Institute, Singapore, who won the National Outstanding Clinician Scientist Award.

OTHER WINNERS

MR WU TUCK SENG: Deputy director and head of the department of pharmacy at the National University Hospital. He received the National Outstanding Clinical Quality Champion Award.

NATIONAL UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL AND NATIONAL HEALTHCARE GROUP POLYCLINICS: The team of four received the National Clinical Excellence Team Award for their efforts at finding ways to slow down the progression of diabetic kidney disease to end-stage renal failure.