

**NATIONAL RESEARCH FOUNDATION**  
PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE  
SINGAPORE

**OPENING REMARKS BY GUEST OF HONOUR, PROFESSOR TAN CHORH CHUAN, AT  
THE MOU SIGNING CEREMONY BETWEEN SANOFI, A\*STAR AND NATIONAL SKIN  
CENTRE TO ADVANCE RESEARCH ON mRNA THERAPEUTIC VACCINE FOR ACNE  
ON 22 NOV 2024, 3PM**

Her Excellency Minh-di Tang, Ambassador of France to Singapore,  
Dr. Jean-François Toussaint, Global Head of Research and Development Vaccines,  
Sanofi,  
Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen

1. Good afternoon. It is a great pleasure to be with you today to witness the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Sanofi, the Agency for Science, Technology and Research and the National Skin Centre to advance research on mRNA therapeutic vaccines for acne.
2. This MoU marks a significant step forward in skin research and innovation in Singapore. It also represents a key milestone in our partnership with Sanofi, building further on Sanofi's long-standing presence in Singapore across manufacturing and commercial activities.
3. In Singapore, conditions such as eczema, acne and pigmentary disorders are top dermatological concerns. Acne affects 88% of teenagers, with its impact often extending into adulthood<sup>1</sup>. Acne can also be associated with profound mental and psychosocial burden, influencing self-esteem and quality of life. Through this MOU, Sanofi, ASTAR and NSC will pursue innovative research that seeks to address these effects holistically and develop comprehensive treatments that also support the well-being of the patients.
4. Singapore is uniquely positioned to lead research in Asian specific skin conditions because of our diverse, multi-racial population. This enables us to generate insights and make discoveries that are relevant for our region, and which also contribute to global understanding of skin health. In turn, this creates the strong scientific foundation for developing solutions for skin conditions in our population, as well as for the needs of Asian skin types.
5. Skin health research in Singapore has been highly collaborative over the past decade, involving partnerships with multinational corporations (MNCs), local enterprises, and research institutions. These collaborations have led to

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<sup>1</sup> Tan HH, Tan AWH, Barkham T, et al. Community-based study of acne vulgaris in adolescents in Singapore. Br J Dermatol. 2007;157(3):547–551

innovations in skin-friendly cosmetics, dermatological treatments, and novel materials for personal care.

6. They have also resulted in the building of research strengths in several areas of skin health. In 2013, a tripartite collaboration was established between A\*STAR, National Healthcare Group (NHG) and Nanyang Technological University, Singapore (NTU Singapore) to form the Skin Research Institute of Singapore (SRIS). SRIS harnesses the expertise of scientists, clinicians and engineers to conduct high impact, interdisciplinary skin research to improve skin health and reduce the burden of skin diseases particularly for Asian populations. I would like to mention 2 examples which illustrate the value of this multidisciplinary approach. First, scientists from Nanyang Technological University (NTU) and the National Skin Centre developed the world's first RNA-based microneedle patch for scar prevention. Second, P&G, NTU and A\*STAR collaborated to develop, Hapsense, Singapore's first wearable sensor for real-time skin feel measurement. Directionally, such research will help advance Singapore's position as a leader in the next wave of precision skin treatments.
7. In addition to improving patient outcomes, advances in skin research also contribute to broader economic value creations. Innovations in this field supports industry-facing sectors including those for personal care, and anchors Singapore as a hub for the skin and hair-care, pharmaceutical, and medtech industries.
8. This afternoon, we are witnessing the establishment of a synergistic partnership that leverages complementary clinical and research strengths in both Singapore and Sanofi, to enhance healthcare outcomes and create economic value. We are truly excited about the prospects and opportunities that this collaboration will unleash.
9. In closing, I would like to thank Sanofi and our institutional partners for their dedication to this partnership. I look forward to the innovative solutions that will be created to combat skin diseases, and enhance human health for the benefit of our patients and the wider populations in Singapore and beyond. Thank you.

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