Mr Khaw Boon Wan – Minister for Health  
Ms Yong Ying-I, Permanent Secretary, Ministry for Health  
Professor Shih Choon-Fong, President of NUS  
Mr Bernard Chen, Chairman of Singhealth Group,  
Dr Sanders Williams, Dean of Duke University School of Medicine  
Honoured and Distinguished guests  
Ladies & gentlemen

Good evening.

On behalf of the GMS Governing Board, I welcome you to the Ground Breaking Ceremony for the DUKE-NUS Graduate Medical School Singapore.

This is a very significant milestone in Singapore’s medical education history.

With the founding of the Duke-NUS Graduate Medical School, Singapore will be served by two medical schools, each representing a different but globally successful model of medical education.

The NUS Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine represents the British medical system of undergraduate medical education, which has served Singapore well for 100 years; since the founding of the first Medical School here at the Outram Campus in 1905. It was called the Straits Settlements and FMS Government Medical School, and had its first intake of only 23 students.

Situated today at the NUS Campus in Kent Ridge, and renamed the NUS Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine, this school has produced successive generations of outstanding Singapore doctors and highly successful professional and academic leaders, including many of you who are here with us today.
This has been the key factor in revolutionizing healthcare services for Singaporeans who enjoy a high international standard of healthcare without having to leave the country. Its doctors too have offered world-class healthcare services to large numbers of foreign patients who come to our shores for medical treatment, making Singapore a hub for regional healthcare. The Yong Loo Lin School is also widely recognized for its strong capabilities in research and innovation. In 2005, NUS was ranked #15 among universities worldwide, for biomedical sciences, by the Times Higher Education Supplement of London.

It is therefore fitting that we are standing here today, on this very historic site where medical education first started in Singapore, to witness the groundbreaking ceremony of the Duke-NUS Graduate Medical School.

The Duke University School of Medicine too, has a similarly illustrious history. Established in 1930 with an initial intake of 30 students, Duke has grown into one of the largest biomedical and clinical research institutions, ranking amongst the top five American medical schools in terms of grant funding from their National Institute of Health.

Youngest amongst the top American medical schools, Duke School of Medicine offers a curriculum that is unique even in the US. An entire year is devoted to independent research or other scholarly and academic pursuits, resulting in a high proportion of its graduates going on to careers as clinician-scientists and clinician-investigators.

The GMS will be a pioneering institution, serving to bridge and unite the best aspects and practices of these two powerful and successful medical traditions. The School will offer a four year graduate-level entry medical program that leads to a Doctor of Medicine (MD) degree, bringing to Singapore an alternative and complementary model of medical education.

Its mission is to be a leading medical school in Asia that will attract excellent faculty and students from Singapore and beyond. It will start with a small intake of 25 students that will eventually grow to a steady state cohort of 200.
The GMS seeks to position itself as a world-class institution of scientific excellence with world-wide collaboration. It will tap on Duke’s unique and highly successful curriculum with strong emphasis on research which would attract top students with the ability and inclination towards biomedical research. This will nurture a strong pipeline of creative and innovative clinician-scientists, critical for biomedical sciences and research, and adding strength and depth to Singapore’s vision as a world-class biomedical hub.

The GMS Governing Board, its Faculty, Management and staff, under the strong and capable leadership of Dean Sanders Williams, are confident they have the expertise, experience, and determination to achieve this mission.

Specifically, the key deliverables of GMS are:

In education: to produce clinically competent doctors with significant training in research, who will become leaders in different fields of endeavor. It is envisaged that graduates from GMS will contribute significantly to the development of a new breed of doctors for Singapore, in the form of talented clinician-scientists with strong research expertise. The GMS curriculum will be based on the Duke curriculum, with modifications to fit the local setting and situation. Its standards, with respect to student admission, faculty recruitment, and educational and research programs, will be consistent with the academic quality and standards of Duke University School of Medicine.

In research: GMS will contribute to the development of human capital and research manpower in Singapore, by attracting top-notch researchers internationally, as well as from Duke. GMS will develop a number of signature research programs that will have high scientific impact in terms of the quality of the investigators, and their scientific outputs, innovation and application.

In this regard, and on behalf of the GMS, I wish to recognize the solid commitment and support we have been receiving for this project from the Singapore Government and its Stakeholder Agencies, as well as from Duke University and NUS, for which we are most grateful.
I also wish to express my deep appreciation to members of the GMS Governing Board and the Management, for their dedication, commitment and contribution over the past one year. This has made it possible for us to meet the very tight time-line, in order to celebrate the Ground-breaking Ceremony today.

May I also thank each and everyone of you, for taking time from your very busy schedules to attend this auspicious event, and for your invaluable support for the Duke-NUS Graduate Medical School.

Thank you.