ISSUE 16.2022

National Healthcare Group
POLYCLINICS

Transforming PRIMARY & CARE

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HANDS-ON TRAINING FOR STUDENTS
LEARNING ON THE JOB THROUGH OPERATING A FOOD TRUCK

IN AND AROUND
EXTENDED HOURS TO FIGHT COVID-19, NURSES' MERIT AWARD 2022 AND MORE



FOR A HEALTHIER SINGAPORE

KALLANG POLYCLINIC OFFICIALLY OPENS

Providing primary care that meets the evolving needs of the community

2021 APEX® AWARDS FOR PUBLICATION EXCELLENCE



Transforming Primary Care Towards a Healthier SG

As Singapore embarks on the Healthier SG initiative – a fundamental remodelling of our national healthcare strategy that prioritises preventive and population health – primary care providers including the National Healthcare Group Polyclinics (NHGP) will play a key role in enhancing the health of the community.

Today, Singapore's primary healthcare landscape is faced with the challenges of managing a rapidly ageing population and an increasing chronic disease burden – challenges that cannot be handled by a single entity on its own. As NHGP's CEO Associate Professor Chong Phui-Nah said at the Kallang Polyclinic Official Opening in May this year: "If it takes a village to raise a child, it will definitely take many more hands to improve the health of an entire population. NHGP has long recognised the importance of developing strong partnerships with various stakeholders, such as our patients and their families, and also community partners to create healthier communities and contribute to the collective goal of a healthier Singapore".

In our cover story 'Serving the Kallang Community', find out how NHGP is improving the well-being of Kallang residents by connecting the dots – integrating health and social needs into patient care – and how its new facilities, innovations and community collaborations will strengthen care delivery.

To learn about NHGP's community-centred programme, turn to our feature story 'Serving Light Bites and Work Experience', which centres on our partnership with Assumption Pathway School (APS) to provide APS students with an experiential learning opportunity through operating a food truck at Kallang Polyclinic.

As NHGP continues to make strides to enhance the quality of our care, activate our patients, empower the communities we work with and focus on the wider determinants of health, we encourage all patients to start taking charge of their own health — and join us in this national effort of creating a Healthier SG.

The Editorial Team

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(Left to Right) Dr Valerie Teo, Head of Kallang Polyclinic; Mr Ong Ye Kung, Minister for Health; A/Prof Chong Phui-Nah, CEO NHGP and Primary Care; and Mr Tan Tee How, Chairman, NHG, ushering the opening of Kallang Polyclinic.

SERVING THE KALLANG COMMUNITY

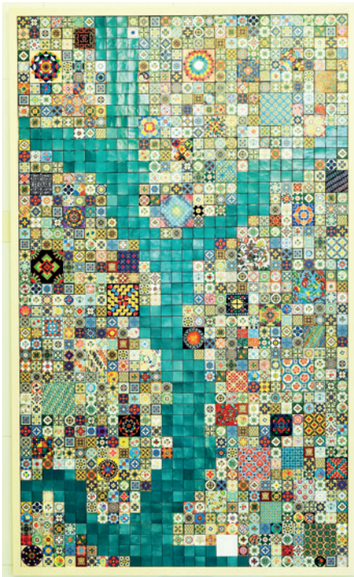
Kallang Polyclinic — NHGP's newest Polyclinic — has implemented a number of care models and community engagements that will continue to drive our mission of transforming primary care.

Officially opened by Mr Ong Ye Kung, Minister for Health, on 7 May 2022, Kallang Polyclinic is the first new NHG Polyclinic to open since the reorganisation of Singapore's public healthcare system in 2017. Having a population where at least one in five people living in the Kallang area is aged 65 or older, and where about 60% are aged 40 years and above, Kallang Polyclinic adopted a multi-faceted strategy to ensure a holistic approach to population health, providing preventive care as well as accessible, comprehensive, continuous and coordinated care to patients of all ages.

To better understand the area's demographic and socio-economic profile, and develop appropriate services, the National Healthcare Group Polyclinics (NHGP) engaged Area Advisers, Grassroots Leaders, community partners and residents during the polyclinic's early planning stages. This relationship was underscored during the official opening graced by Minister Ong, when he unveiled a symbol of this cooperation — a co-created art mural titled *Streams of Life* which embodies the diverse and multicultural communities who work, play and live in Kallang.

INNOVATIVE PROGRAMMES TO NURTURE A HEALTHY SINGAPORE

At the official opening ceremony, Associate Professor (A/Prof) Chong Phui-Nah, Chief Executive Officer, NHGP and Primary Care, shared that Kallang Polyclinic will enhance NHGP's efforts to strengthen preventive care at the primary care level. This is an important approach



The *Streams of Life* mural depicting an image of Singapore's longest body of water – the Kallang River – is made up of more than 1,000 hand-crafted heritage tile pieces featuring a variety of patterns and designs contributed by different stakeholders from the community including staff, patients, schools, the People's Association and our community partners.



Staff Nurse Ms Lim Gek Swee demonstrating the use of the SMARTVacc system to Minister Ong at the official opening of Kallang Polyclinic.

> "Traditionally, vaccines are manually picked by nurses from the vaccination fridge prior to administration. Many steps are required to ensure the vaccines are correctly administered. With SMARTVacc, vaccines can now be cross-checked against an in-built image recognition system, thereby ensuring patient safety.
>
> **Dr Valerie Teo**
> Family Physician, Consultant and Head of Kallang Polyclinic



One of the self-help blood pressure stations located around Kallang Polyclinic which patients can use to check their blood pressure prior to consultation with the care team.

given Singapore's ageing population and the growing burden of chronic diseases. This focus on lowering health risks, and preventing or delaying the onset of developing chronic diseases is also aligned to the national Healthier SG strategy.

Kallang Polyclinic will support NHGP's mission to transform primary care through innovative programmes and individualised care plans. This includes NHGP's Teamlet Care Model, where a dedicated team of healthcare professionals delivers proactive, sustained and continuous care in the management of chronic diseases. To encourage patients to be active participants in managing their own health, self-help monitoring stations have been strategically placed within the polyclinic. Patients are able to take their blood pressure and Body Mass Index (BMI) readings at Self-Service Blood Pressure stations and BMI machines respectively prior to consultation with their care teams.

Kallang Polyclinic is also the first NHG Polyclinic to have a Health Studio within its grounds. This dedicated multi-purpose space will support efforts in patient empowerment and activation. It will also serve as the venue for small-scale programmes such as healthy cooking classes, workshops and small group exercise classes that encourage patients to adopt healthy lifestyle habits. Prior to the official opening of Kallang Polyclinic, a 'Health Masterchef' cooking competition with the theme of using herbs found at the Edible Garden on Level 5 of the polyclinic was held at the Health Studio. The winning healthy recipe was cooked during the official opening and is now available on NHGP's YouTube channel.

Scan to watch video.

These new and unique patient-facing amenities aside, Kallang Polyclinic is the homeground of a pilot project, which sees the use of a fully-automated and intelligent vaccine management and dispensing system – SMARTVacc (Safety Manpower Productivity Accountability Real Time Analytics Vaccine System). SMARTVacc is the first of its kind in Singapore and will replace conventional manual vaccine fridges. Designed for polyclinic vaccination nurses to enhance patient safety and enhance staff productivity, it was the outcome of a project entry titled, 'A More Efficient Way to Manage the Inventory and Dispensing of Vaccines in Polyclinics'. This project won an award at the 2019 Innovation Challenge organised by the National Healthcare Group Centre for Medical Technologies & Innovations (CMTI).

INTEGRATING HEALTH AND SOCIAL NEEDS INTO PATIENT CARE

Beyond being a new primary healthcare provider for the community, Kallang Polyclinic has introduced novel programmes that connect the dots between community partners and social agencies.



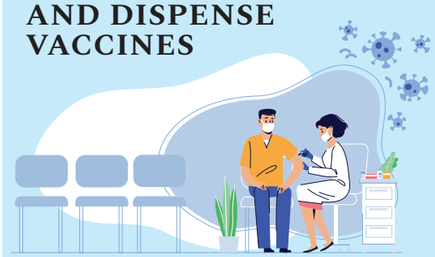
Dr Valerie Teo presenting a token of appreciation — a portrait made up of 10 heritage tiles and a sketch of the new clinic — to Minister Ong together with A/Prof Chong and Mr Tan Tee How.

One of these is the RELATE programme (which stands for RELationship-based HeAlth & Social InTEgration) to support elderly patients and their families who have complex medical and social needs. The second is EMBRACE^{PLUS} or Enhanced Maternal Baby ToddleR And Child SurvEillance^{PLUS}, which serves the growing number of young families who live in and around the area. This programme looks out for vulnerable children aged 0 to 3 years



Minister Ong looking on while Ms Vallirajaram, a patient of the polyclinic and winner of the cooking competition cooks her winning recipe – Batang fish – using kaffir lime leaves, a herb which is also grown at the polyclinic's Edible Garden.

A SMARTER, SAFER WAY TO MANAGE AND DISPENSE VACCINES



The SMARTVacc or Safety Manpower Productivity Accountability Real Time Analytics Vaccine System will enhance patient safety, improve productivity and optimise resources with:

- **An in-built image recognition system that cross-checks selected vaccines before they are dispensed;**
- **Automated live inventory tracking;**
- **First-in-first-out dispensing to prevent waste;**
- **Increased storage capacity; and**
- **A function to track expired vaccines and 'disable' them from being dispensed. This will improve safety by reducing the risk of human error.**

Removing manual non-clinical tasks such as stock-taking from their day-to-day operations also allows nurses to focus more on patient care. SMARTVacc is set to be rolled out to all NHG Polyclinics so that all vaccine stocks can be monitored digitally.



Kallang Community Club's percussion band Sambiesta on stage during the Kallang Polyclinic Opening event.

old from low-income families to address health and social issues. It also serves mothers and offers screening for postnatal depression as well as gestational diabetes mellitus.

Dr Karen Ng, Chief Clinical Services, NHGP, explains that RELATE is a multi-disciplinary collaboration. Kallang Polyclinic's Teamlets and partners – such as Kwong Wai Shiu Hospital, Agency for Integrated Care, TOUCH Community Services, AWWA Family Service Centre and Lions Befrienders – hold multi-disciplinary meetings to develop shared care plans for patients. "This ensures that all members of the team work towards a common set of goals for the patient, with the patient at the centre of care," she says.

A key component of RELATE is the follow-up support provided by an NHGP Care Coach who acts as a health buddy, health-social integrator and a single point of contact between the patient and their healthcare team and community partners. This empowers patients and families to navigate their care between NHGP, partners and hospitals for more sustained and integrated care that goes beyond the medical arena and into the community.

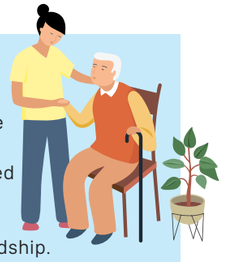
WITH THE COMMUNITY, FOR THE COMMUNITY

Kallang Polyclinic also strengthens its engagement with the community in other ways. It is the first NHG Polyclinic to introduce a Patient Advisory Council (PAC) that will help advance NHGP's patient and family-centred care culture. Formed in 2021, PAC members comprise an invited group of patients, caregivers and volunteers from diverse backgrounds who work together with the clinic's management team to enhance the care experience of NHGP patients and deliver targeted solutions for each specific community. When it comes to improving patients' experiences, no idea is too small, and one such bright idea put up by the PAC team was to set up the urine sample holder in toilets to make specimen collection more convenient.

Youths and schools have also been part of Kallang Polyclinic's community-centred approach. Besides co-creating the *Streams of Life* art mural, students from Northlight School and Hong Wen School created a series of artworks displayed on the polyclinic walls. In addition, Kallang Polyclinic has partnered Assumption Pathway School (APS) in a food truck initiative sited on the polyclinic grounds. This one-of-a-kind food truck gives APS students a real-life opportunity to run a Food & Beverage business and learn about healthy food choices. Offering a specially co-designed menu by APS and dietitians from NHGP, the food truck offers healthier food options.

Dr Valerie Teo, Family Physician, Consultant and Head of Kallang Polyclinic, notes that these collaborations that span the medical, social and educational realms are all integral components in driving NHGP's primary care mission forward. "We have a firm belief that personalised and comprehensive care together with investing in preventive health, clinical innovations, and community collaboration can be transformative in our collective health journey to achieve better patient outcomes," she says.

BENEFITTING FROM A 360° CARE PLAN



With multiple medical conditions such as Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD), diabetes, hypertension and more, Mr Yeo Cheng Kee, 79, is one Kallang resident who was enrolled into the RELATE programme. Mr Yeo – who used to run a hardware store – is unemployed and lives alone. Apart from his medical issues, he faces social isolation and financial hardship.

To help him holistically, the Kallang Polyclinic Teamlet developed a care plan to address his health, as well as psycho-social needs. He has since been referred by NHGP's Medical Social Worker for financial support, befriender services and receives physiotherapy sessions at Kallang Polyclinic to improve his strength and mobility.

His Care Coach also helps him keep track of his goals and progress, and coordinates the support between various community partners. Additionally, close communication and collaboration between care team and community partners are maintained to follow up on his progress and shared care plan. Community partners also pay home visits to Mr Yeo's house when necessary. Since enrolling in RELATE, Mr Yeo has been receiving holistic support. He can now focus on his health and is better engaged in his community.


The food truck, a collaboration between NHGP and APS, located at the Kallang Polyclinic premises.

SERVING LIGHT BITES AND WORK EXPERIENCE

A novel food truck concept at Kallang Polyclinic not only provides a convenient meal option, but offers students from Assumption Pathway School a valuable platform to learn on the job and improve their service skills.



(Front row from left) Ms Denise Phua, MP for Jalan Besar GRC (Kampong Glam); Mr Heng Chee How, MP for Jalan Besar (Whampoa); Dr Wan Rizal Wan Zakariah, MP for Jalan Besar GRC (Kolam Ayer); *(Back row from left)* Mr Stephen Chin, Principal, APS; and Mr Ong Ye Kung, Minister for Health, showing their support to APS students Syabil Suhaimi (next to Minister Ong) and Chua Jia Yang at the food truck.

Though a relatively 'new kid on the block', Kallang Polyclinic has deepened its community partnerships through a range of engagements and collaborative projects. One of these is in the form of a one-of-a-kind food truck, which is conveniently – and eye-catchingly – located on the polyclinic grounds.

The food truck is a culmination of a Collaboration Agreement signed on 8 April 2022 between the National Healthcare Group Polyclinics (NHGP) and Assumption Pathway School (APS). Serving light meals, snacks and beverages, this food truck is not merely a vendor providing tasty bites for patients, their caregivers and the polyclinic staff – it is a partnership which provides APS students an experiential learning opportunity. This is all part of APS' On-the-Job-Training programme to help deepen their students' work skills, knowledge and values through an authentic work environment. During their attachment, they are mentored on the job by coaches and trainers.

Ms Doreen Poon, APS Job Coach, shares that students manage the food truck on their own to facilitate maximum training opportunities. Job coaches will step in to offer assistance only when the need arises. "Unlike being in the school environment, working at the food truck is a challenge for the students," she says. "However, the experience is also rewarding as it allows students to interact with actual customers, providing them with real-life working experience." This concept, though new to NHGP, underscores the commitment to its primary care goals, which goes beyond medical treatment to supporting good health sustainably and holistically. To this end, the food truck offers Halal-Certified bentos and snacks which are specially developed by APS and NHGP's dietitians. A range of healthier food options are available, from light bento meals to snacks such as cookies, bread and muffins prepared by students at the APS central kitchens. This not only aligns with NHGP's goal of driving healthy lifestyles, but also helps to educate the students on healthy food choices and creating healthier meals. Dr Valerie Teo, Family Physician, Consultant and Head of Kallang Polyclinic, says, "This project signifies NHGP's commitment to advocate healthy living for Singapore's population."

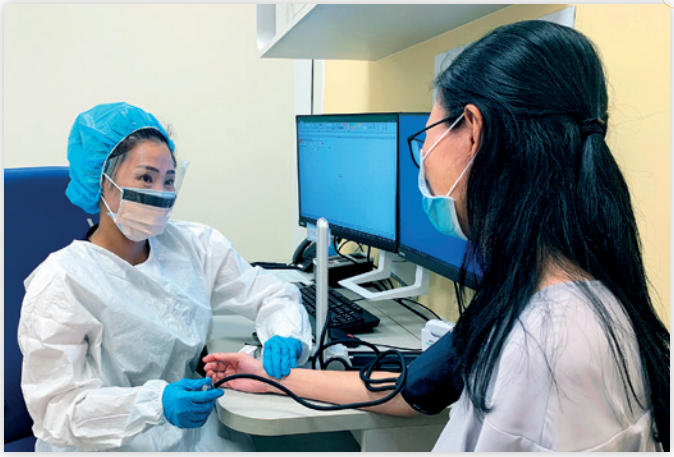
21-year-old Syabil Suhaimi is an APS student who is part of the crew working at the food truck three days a week under APS' On-the-Job-Training programme. "I feel great, as working in a food truck gives me the opportunity to make friends with customers through conversations. Before this, food trucks were not well-known in Singapore. So, I am grateful for this opportunity," he says. Another APS student who is also part of the food truck crew members, Chua Jia Yang, 18, says, "I felt confused and the processes seemed complicated for me on my first day of work at the food truck. However, I have since mastered the job after working for a few months. I am now able to prepare food and serve customers."



The official signing of the Collaboration Agreement between NHGP and APS signifying NHGP's commitment to continue advocating healthy living for Singapore's population. *(From left to right)* Dr Valerie Teo, Head of Kallang Polyclinic; Associate Professor Chong Phui-Nah, CEO, NHGP and Primary Care; Mr Stephen Chin, Principal, APS; and Mr Christopher Neo, Executive Director, Vocational Programme, APS.

EXTENDED HOURS TO FIGHT COVID-19

In response to a call by the Ministry of Health for polyclinic clusters to help manage the increasing numbers of patients with Acute Respiratory Infection (ARI), the National Healthcare Group Polyclinics' (NHGP) two polyclinics, Woodlands Polyclinic and Kallang Polyclinic, were among the six polyclinics in Singapore that extended operating hours for two weekends – Saturday afternoons and Sunday mornings on 26 and 27 February, and 5 and 6 March 2022.



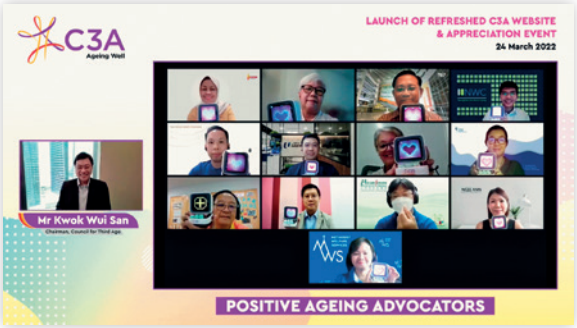
NURSES' MERIT AWARD 2022

Ms Cindy Lee, Nurse Educator, Nursing Services; and Ms Wan Lili, Nurse Manager, Yishun Polyclinic are the proud recipients of the Ministry of Health Nurses' Merit Award 2022. This award is a testament to the nurses' commitment and contributions to patient care in National Healthcare Group Polyclinics. To all nurses, thank you for your sacrifices and for being our heroes!



(From left) Ms Cindy Lee, Nurse Educator, Nursing Services; and Ms Wan Lili, Nurse Manager, Yishun Polyclinic.

PCA RECEIVES 'POSITIVE AGEING ADVOCATOR' AWARD



The National Healthcare Group's Primary Care Academy (PCA) was among the 54 healthcare institutions and eldercare providers to receive the 'Positive Ageing Advocator' Award from the Council for Third Age (C3A), a non-profit organisation that promotes active ageing in Singapore, during the Launch of Refreshed C3A Website & Appreciation Event held on 24 March 2022. Since 2018, PCA has been working closely with C3A to promote lifelong learning among seniors through curated courses, community outreach programmes and collaborations with community partners.

NHGP PRIMARY CARE RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM 2022



NHGP held its second virtual Primary Care Research Symposium on 26 March 2022. Titled 'Improving Primary Care Management of Asthma', the webinar featured Associate Professor Tang Wern Ee, NHGP's Director of Clinical Research Unit and Information Management & Analytics, and Chairperson of the Singapore National Asthma Programme-3, who shared research findings and updates on asthma management. The webinar also featured distinguished speakers from the National University Hospital, Nanyang Technological University Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine and Singapore General Hospital.