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National Healthcare Group
POLYCLINICS

Transforming PRIMARY CARE

Delivering PATIENT-CENTRED CARE

+ ISSUE 02 2018



ENDURING PASSION

A NEW CHAPTER FOR ANG MO KIO POLYCLINIC

DOUBLE CELEBRATION

Hello



EDITOR'S NOTE

As part of building a sustainable, future-ready healthcare system, the National Healthcare Group Polyclinics (NHGP) aims to extend its services beyond providing medical treatment to enhancing health and quality of life. We constantly look at how we can provide appropriate, coordinated and comprehensive care for our patients, within their communities and closer to their homes.

Back in 2015, NHGP marked an important milestone in its journey to transform primary care when we introduced the teamlet care model. It enabled our staff to provide holistic, personalised and continuous primary healthcare, and also empowered patients to take charge of their own health. Today, we are caring for some 100,000 patients with chronic conditions across six polyclinics under this initiative, and seeing positive results.

In ensuring that the primary healthcare system remains relevant now and in the future, we have been redeveloping our existing polyclinics and developing new ones. On 30 June, the relocated and redeveloped Ang Mo Kio Polyclinic officially opened with a larger floor space, more services and upgraded facilities to better serve the residents, especially the elderly. In July, we also witnessed the groundbreaking of Bukit Canberra, an integrated sports and recreational hub where the future Sembawang Polyclinic will be sited.

As NHGP continues to look at ways to improve its care delivery model, we also want to remember our everyday heroes – the various healthcare professionals who offer care to patients and their families. In celebration of Nurses' Day on 1 August, NHGP wishes to give thanks to all nurses for their contributions, and for being a pillar of strength to patients in their journey towards better health.

Thank you for reading!

The Editorial Team

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Delivering PATIENT-CENTRED CARE

How can we step up our efforts to enhance the quality and efficiency of primary healthcare in Singapore? In this issue, Dr Sabrina Wong shares how the National Healthcare Group Polyclinics (NHGP) has achieved marked improvements through its collaborative model of care. The NHGP teamlet model has enabled NHGP to provide more comprehensive, continuous and coordinated care for our patients.

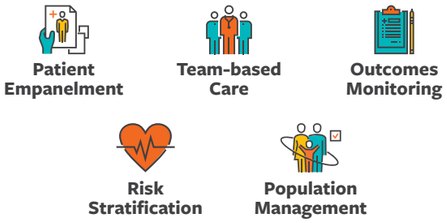


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Relationship-based Healthcare

The need to develop a relationship-based healthcare system led us to start the teamlet care model in NHGP. We wanted the same team to look after patients with chronic conditions on a regular and sustained basis. Concurrently, we wanted to empower patients to care for their own health. We recognised that developing trust between patients and a dedicated team of care providers and healthcare professionals would benefit patients.

KEY COMPONENTS OF TEAMLET CARE MODEL

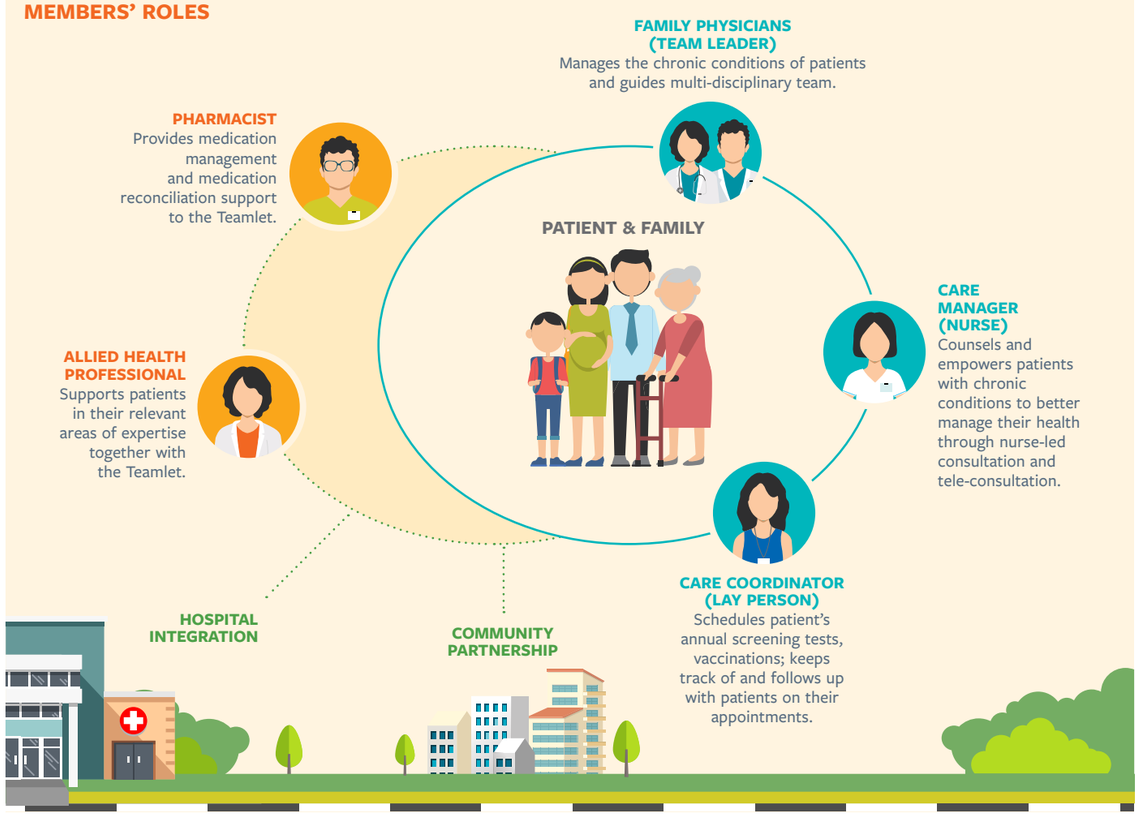




△ The teamlet model of care comprises two family physicians, one care manager and one care coordinator.

TEAMLET CARE MODEL

MEMBERS' ROLES



AT A GLANCE: NHGP TEAMLET CARE MODEL

First rolled out in 2015
at Toa Payoh Polyclinic

25 Teamlets
across all six NHG Polyclinics

100,000 patients
with chronic conditions

**Information accurate as of July 2018*

Framework

A framework anchored on individual teams (each called a Teamlet) comprising two family physicians, a care manager and a care coordinator will provide us with a greater opportunity for care integration, a more cohesive patient approach and enhance the synergistic effects of teamwork. Where applicable, each Teamlet is further supported by allied health professionals to provide a holistic framework for health and social care. That way, patients with varying needs will be assured of comprehensive and continuous care from the multi-disciplinary team comprising different healthcare members.



"In the past, there were no designated doctors or nurse to look after my health. Now with this teamlet care model concept, it allows the clinical team to understand my medical history, monitor my health progress closely and provide the best care plan for me. This gives me the opportunity to improve my health jointly with my healthcare team."

– LEON CHESTER STEWART, ANG MO KIO POLYCLINIC PATIENT



Family Physician Dr Lim Ziliang (second from right) in a joint consultation with care manager, Senior Staff Nurse Ms Chong Lee Sze (left).

Risk Stratification

Instead of a one-size-fits-all model of care, the teamlet care model considers the individual's health risk by stratifying risk based on patients' medical conditions. By stratifying risk based on disease types and their complexity, and tailoring care bundles using a team-based approach for each risk stratum, patient care is customised to need, optimising resource allocation.

Addressing Needs Proactively

Engaging in a pre-consultation huddle allows the Teamlet an opportunity to identify patients who require additional care. For instance, the care coordinators will identify patients with preventive care needs, while care managers will identify patients with complex medical needs. This proactive method helps patients with their medical needs and promotes a preventive health approach.



The multi-disciplinary team discuss a complex patient case at the huddle space located behind the consultation rooms of the Teamlet.

Results

This multi-disciplinary model of care has significantly improved our patients' health outcomes. Each Teamlet can now better manage patients' chronic conditions through regular discussions and in particular, address complexities that may involve psychosocial issues. Backed by consistent care received from the same healthcare team over the long term, our Teamlets can also proactively identify at-risk conditions and provide early intervention. And the results speak for themselves.

Twelve to 24 months after we piloted the teamlet care model in Ang Mo Kio, Woodlands, Toa Payoh and Yishun Polyclinics, we conducted a study to evaluate the health outcomes of this first cohort of patients. Our study showed that patients taken care of by Teamlets had improved significantly when it came to chronic disease management (e.g. diabetes) and actively participated in preventive health screenings (e.g. diabetic eye and foot screenings, pap smear and mammogram). Patients under the teamlet care model halved their risks of emergency department visits for diabetes and hypertension-related problems. Teamlet patients were also more satisfied with their care and felt that this approach was more patient-centered.

LOOKING AHEAD

This NHGP teamlet care model has brought about a paradigm shift in the way we manage patients with chronic conditions – providing quality and enhanced care, and achieving effective health outcomes while optimising resource use. Our work has just begun and we will continue to improve the delivery of our services to provide healthcare that is of high value to all our patients. Eventually, we would want to see all our regular patients with chronic conditions being cared for by our NHGP Teamlets, together with their family members. We want to enhance patients' health, empower them to care for their own health and continue to expand the scope of primary care by tapping on existing resources, such as allied health professionals, hospital specialists, community and General Practitioner partners.

A NEW CHAPTER FOR ANG MO KIO POLYCLINIC

To provide a more comprehensive range of services and to better serve the needs of a growing and greying population, Ang Mo Kio (AMK) Polyclinic has moved to a new building that is larger than the previous one.

The new AMK Polyclinic was officially opened on 30 June 2018 by Guest-of-Honour Prime Minister (PM) Lee Hsien Loong, together with Dr Lam Pin Min, Senior Minister of State for Health. Marking the clinic's official opening, a colourful quilt piece was unveiled and completed by PM Lee, Dr Lam, Madam Kay Kuok, National Healthcare Group (NHG) Chairman, and Professor Philip Choo, NHG Group Chief Executive Officer (CEO). The quilt piece – aptly titled 'The Tree of Life' – was jointly created by patients, partners and staff, and will be permanently displayed at AMK Polyclinic's Community Plaza.



A joint effort by patients, partners and staff, 'The Tree of Life' quilt piece will be a permanent display at AMK Polyclinic's Community Plaza. (Photo credit: Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong's Facebook)

As part of the opening festivities, guests were treated to a kompang performance put up by volunteers from Teck Ghee Community Club as well as a social dance item by senior citizens from Yio Chu Kang Community Club Zone 3 Residents' Committee. Guests were also brought on a clinic tour to see the comprehensive services available to patients.



Senior citizens from Yio Chu Kang Community Club Zone 3 Residents' Committee performed a social dance item for guests.



PM Lee reprised his role as Guest-of-Honour, some 14 years since he last officiated AMK Polyclinic's opening at its former location. (Left - right) Dr Christopher Chong, Head of AMK Polyclinic; Dr Lam Pin Min, Senior Minister of State for Health; PM Lee; Madam Kay Kuok, Chairman of NHG; Associate Professor (A/Prof) Chong Phui-Nah, CEO of NHGP and Primary Care; and Professor Philip Choo, Group CEO of NHG.



Sembawang residents took part in NHGP's sure-win 'Wheel of Fortune' lucky draw after learning how to make the right meal choices.

A NEW POLYCLINIC COMING YOUR WAY!

Bukit Canberra will soon be home to Sembawang (SBW) Polyclinic, NHG's first polyclinic located within an integrated sports and recreational hub. As part of its vision to promote health and disease prevention across different age groups in the community, staff at the future SBW Polyclinic will look at working with Sport Singapore (SportSG) to prescribe relevant exercise programmes for patients and collaborate with the various government agencies co-located in Bukit Canberra. To mark the start of Bukit Canberra's construction works, a family carnival organised by SportSG was held on 1 July 2018. The NHGP team was present to advocate the importance of a balanced diet and healthy eating habits through fun-filled activities at the carnival booths for Sembawang residents.

DOUBLE CELEBRATION

"Hui Jia leads by example, is goal-driven and task-focused in achieving outcomes. She is always able to deliver, is reliable and trustworthy."

– DR CHRISTOPHER CHONG HEAD, AMK POLYCLINIC



Dr Lim Chee Kong (left), Co-Director of the NEMO Programme and Ms Chong Hui Jia (right), Clinic Operations Manager of AMK Polyclinic received their awards at the PST Awards Ceremony on 4 July 2018.

NHGP received double recognition at the Public Service Transformation (PST) Awards 2018. Its Nephrology Evaluation, Management and Optimisation (NEMO) Programme – a collaboration with National University Hospital – was named an ExCEL Innovation Project winner for its efforts in delaying the progression of diabetic kidney disease in Singapore.

In addition, Ms Chong Hui Jia, Clinic Operations Manager at AMK Polyclinic received the Star Manager Award for her dedication and excellent service. Ms Chong works closely with her fellow colleagues to ensure smooth day-to-day operations. As a mentor to her staff, she is effective and encouraging, always believing in giving her best and bringing out the best in others.

A HEALTHY AFFAIR

More than 400 people attended a health fair jointly organised by NHGP and the National Skin Centre on 21 April 2018. The health fair was graced by Dr Koh Poh Koon, Member of Parliament for Ang Mo Kio GRC (Yio Chu Kang Division) as Guest-of-Honour. Apart from picking up tips from NHGP's doctor and psychologist on topics related to physical and mental health, participants had the opportunity to learn how to prepare a unique 'Rainbow Brown Rice Salad' dish created by NHGP's Senior Dietitian Ms Wong Yuefen. The event was held at Yio Chu Kang Community Club in support of the Ang Mo Kio Family Service Centre.



Guest-of-Honour Dr Koh Poh Koon and NHGP's Senior Dietitian Ms Wong Yuefen prepared the 'Rainbow Brown Rice Salad' for participants to sample.



WALKING TOWARDS BETTER HEALTH

Fancy taking 7,500 steps daily? This may sound daunting to most of us, but NHGP staff gamely took on the challenge from January to April 2018 as part of their participation in Health Promotion Board's National Steps Challenge™: Corporate Challenge. And their efforts paid off. NHGP won first place under the 'Health and Social Services' category, and was also ranked sixth overall at the national level.



A/Prof Chong Phui-Nah, CEO, NHGP and Primary Care (right) received the award from Mr Sim Beng Khoon, Director, Workplace Health and Outreach Division, Health Promotion Board, at the ceremony on 23 June 2018.

HELPING HANDS

Hand-washing is one of the easiest 'do-it-yourself' measures against spreading germs and falling ill. Although many people clean their hands with water, very few use soap. To tackle this issue and raise public awareness in conjunction with World Hand Hygiene Day on 5 May 2018, NHGP's Prevention and Control of Infection Committee set up booths at all NHG Polyclinics from 8 to 15 May 2018 to educate patients on the importance of and proper steps to wash hands.



Cultivating good handwashing habits early: A nurse guiding children on how to wash their hands properly.



Enduring Passion

△ Left - right: Ms Chen Yee Chui, Chief Nurse, NHGP, Ms Julia Zhu, Nurse Clinician (Wound Care), Ms Christine Chern, Assistant Nurse Clinician, A/Prof Chong Phui-Nah, CEO, NHGP and Primary Care.

With more than 40 years of combined experience in nursing, primary care nurses Ms Christine Chern and Ms Julia Zhu share similarities in more ways than one. Both were inspired to pursue this noble calling after a positive experience with a nurse during their younger days. Both enjoy teaching and mentoring nurses. And both are this year's Nurses' Merit Award recipients from NHGP. In conjunction with Nurses' Day, and to congratulate them on their win, we caught up with these two amazing ladies to find out what keeps them motivated to make a difference at work every day.

CONGRATULATIONS ON THE AWARD! What do you think makes a good nurse?

C : A person with a heart for those in need.

J : A firm believer in the 3Cs - Caring, Compassionate and Committed.

As nurse clinicians, both of you work closely with doctors and other allied health professionals to deliver comprehensive patient care. Can you briefly describe your main role in a typical day?

C : No two days are ever quite alike! To put it simply, I provide direct care to patients with chronic conditions like diabetes, hypertension, stroke and asthma.

J : I assess the wounds of patients who come to us, establish their management plan and recommend appropriate treatment and therapy. I also advise them on ways to promote wound healing and prevent recurrence, as well as review and adjust their care plans regularly.

What is the most satisfying part of your job?

C : Helping those in my care to better manage their chronic conditions and to enjoy a better quality of life.

J : Being able to support and witness my patients' road to recovery.

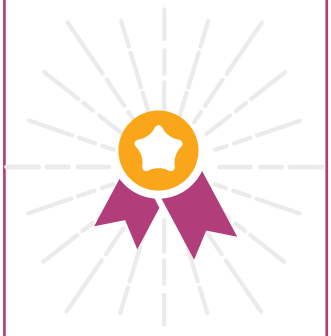
What advice would you give someone who wants to be a nurse?

C : Be prepared for irregular working hours, but an extraordinary career!

J : Do what you love and love what you do, and you won't have to work a day in your life.

C – Ms Christine Chern J – Ms Julia Zhu

WHAT IS THE NURSES' MERIT AWARD?



Started in 1976, the Nurses' Merit Award is given to nurses who have demonstrated consistent and outstanding performance for the past three years, participated in professional development, and have made contributions to promote the nursing profession. Nurses are nominated for the award by their healthcare institutions and selected by a panel set up by the Ministry of Health.