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National Healthcare Group
POLYCLINICS

Transforming PRIMARY CARE

ISSUE 03 2018

Empowering our patients



VISITS TO NHGP

HANDING OVER HOUGANG FMC

YISHUN POLYCLINIC OFFICIALLY LAUNCHED

Hello

EDITOR'S NOTE

The year-end season is always a time of good cheer, and celebrations with friends and family. It is also an apt time to reflect on the accomplishments for the past year, and to look forward to what you hope to achieve in the year to come.

The National Healthcare Group Polyclinics (NHGP) has had many reasons to cheer in the past few months. In November, NHGP commemorated 20 years of serving the Nee Soon community with the official opening of the new Yishun Polyclinic, now bigger and better, and with more improved services.

In September, our Operations team did us proud by winning the prestigious Hospital Management Asia Award for the second year in a row. In the same month, we also handed over Hougang Family Medicine Clinic to a private partner, after three years of close collaboration.

Apart from celebrating our achievements, we would also like to take the opportunity to celebrate our primary care Allied Health Professionals. A dedicated group of healthcare professionals, they have been working alongside our doctors and nurses to provide holistic care to our patients. In this issue, not only will they share tips on how to stay fit and fab this festive season, they will also recollect their fondest 2018 work memory.



While the care and support provided by healthcare professionals are important and appreciated, everyone needs to take care of our own health. As one year closes and another one arrives, we encourage you to plan ahead and look at making small, sustainable changes towards a healthier lifestyle. Remember, small changes go a long way, especially during this time of the year when we tend to be distracted by a variety of festive treats!

Wishing you a happy and healthy new year!

The Editorial Team

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Goodbye 2018, Hello 2019

At the National Healthcare Group Polyclinics (NHGP), our Allied Health Professionals (AHPs) are a vital part of our multi-disciplinary teams that provide holistic care for patients of all ages and their families. As the year draws to a close, we put the spotlight on this specialised group of healthcare professionals who have been working alongside our doctors and nurses. Hear from our five AHPs as they share stories on how they empower their patients on their recovery journey, and tips to stay fit and healthy this festive season.

THE CLINICIAL PSYCHOLOGIST

I had a female patient who was in her late forties. She had physical health issues, and was referred to me for depression and anxiety.

Over a few sessions, I worked with her to better understand her condition and concerns. She gradually gained confidence in her ability to take charge of her life and became more optimistic.

Three months later, she made a point to schedule an appointment, just so that she could let me know she was doing well and to thank me for my help.

I felt fulfilled knowing that I had helped her at a point of time in her life when she was most vulnerable. It was a privilege to be able to journey with her through her recovery.

Follow these five self-care tips:

1. Eat healthily,
2. Be physically active,
3. Practice relaxation techniques,
4. Stay connected with others, and
5. Be thankful.



SOON JIAYING, SENIOR CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGIST



KNOW YOUR PRIMARY HEALTHCARE AHPS

Not sure who AHPs are? Here is what they do to promote good health practices, in a nutshell.

Clinical Psychologists improve the emotional, behavioural and mental health of patients by lightening their emotional distress to lead a better quality of life.

Dietitians use food and nutrition to promote health or manage various medical conditions. They help patients decipher relevant nutritional information and make recommendations best suited to their health needs.

Medical Social Workers have multi-faceted roles which can include counselling patients and their families, conducting mediation programmes for patients facing difficult situations, or referring patients to the appropriate community resources for help.

Physiotherapists prevent, assess, and treat movement disorders caused by physical disabilities, trauma or illness. They work closely with family physicians to treat acute muscle and joint pain early to prevent worsening of condition. Physiotherapists also teach tailored exercises which can be done at home, so that the patient's condition continues to improve even after the clinic session.

Podiatrists deal with diagnosis, treatment and management of foot conditions. Additionally, they train foot care nurses in screening and managing simple foot conditions. They also partner hospital podiatrists to triage patients requiring urgent care to vascular and orthopaedic specialists (excluding emergencies).

THE DIETITIAN

I had been seeing a mother-daughter pair for weight management for some time.

One day, as the mother was preparing to leave after a consultation, she paused at the door and said, "I wish you will work here for a very long time." She went on to share that she and her daughter appreciated that I had gone beyond the call of duty and showed concern for their general well-being. She added that her relationship with her daughter had improved since they started their weight loss journeys together.

It was wonderful to hear her say that and it really made my day.

Mindful eating is the way to go. If you know your dinner celebration with friends this evening is going to be sumptuous, you can half your breakfast and lunch portions that day, or jog an extra 30 minutes the next day. This is a strategy to help manage your weight. You can eat everything but in moderation.

WON TIN CHIANG,
SENIOR DIETITIAN



When you are surrounded by people who are caring and supportive, you are in a better position to deal with the stresses that life brings. Surround yourself with family and friends this festive season, and invest in your relationships.

ZENG JIN LIANG,
MEDICAL SOCIAL WORKER



THE MEDICAL SOCIAL WORKER

I recently met the family of a patient with dementia. The patient was looked after by her daughter and daughter-in-law as she had difficulty to perform her daily tasks. As the daughter and daughter-in-law were the main caregivers, they felt exhausted, anxious and depressed over time. The built-up stress also created tension and conflict among the siblings as each of them turned to blaming and pushing responsibilities. I sat the family down, and counselled them. After the counselling session, the family decided that the best approach was to arrange for their mother to stay in a nursing home. Not too long ago, the family came back to share with me that their relationship had improved and they now visit their mother together at the nursing home.





THE PODIATRIST

I had a patient with a diabetic foot ulcer. When I first met him, he was in a pretty bad shape. Throughout the year-long treatment period, the patient could see his wound improving, and he became happier and more encouraged with each visit. He also took my advice on dressing care and diabetes control.

It gave me immense satisfaction to see his ulcer condition improve with each visit. I will always remember the day his wound healed, and how his face was beaming with happiness. Moments like these make the whole journey worth it.

Show some love to your soles! Always wear shoes that fit well, and provide cushioning and support to your feet.

AMANDA WONG, PODIATRIST



Consistency and persistence in exercise is key to your well-being. Aim to sit less and move more. Walk, stretch or do strength training for a minute or two for every half to one hour that you are seated.

KUAN SWEE HONG, SENIOR PHYSIOTHERAPIST



THE PHYSIOTHERAPIST

I had a middle-aged patient who was a homemaker. She was advised to pursue surgery for her knee pain but she had doubts and preferred to try physiotherapy first.

I assessed her condition, factored in physical activities that were important to her, and prescribed her an exercise plan. I explained the possible causes of her pain, proposed treatment plan and taught her exercises which can be incorporated into her daily activities.

After a few physiotherapy sessions, she felt much better and could resume her regular activities. She continued to grow stronger, her knee pain minimised, and she avoided surgery.





VISITS TO NHGP

The months of August and September saw NHGP hosting government officials from Singapore and Thailand at the Ang Mo Kio (AMK) and Woodlands (WDL) Polyclinics respectively. Here is a recap of the visits:

Future-Ready Primary Healthcare
Mr Edwin Tong, Senior Minister of State (SMS) for Law and Health, and Minister Khaw Boon Wan, Coordinating Minister for Infrastructure and Minister for Transport, toured AMK Polyclinic on 7 September 2018 and 25 September 2018 respectively.

NHGP representatives showed SMS Tong and Minister Khaw the clinic's extensive range of services, and introduced NHGP's suite of innovative technologies aimed at improving productivity. SMS Tong noted how NHGP's teamlet care model – which pairs a dedicated team of healthcare professionals to a patient – provides better care for those with chronic diseases. Minister Khaw also stopped by the Gallery of Memories to get a glimpse into the journey of primary healthcare in Singapore.



◁ SMS Tong (centre) with NHGP representatives at AMK Polyclinic's Heritage Wall.

▽ Dr Valerie Teo, Deputy Head of AMK Polyclinic, giving Minister Khaw an overview of the AMK Polyclinic infrastructure while A/Prof Chong Phui-Nah (right-most), CEO of NHGP and Primary Care looked on.



Sawadee Ka!
On 30 August 2018, Dr Evan Sim, Head of WDL Polyclinic and his clinical team hosted 21 delegates from Thailand's Ministry of Health. Dr Sim and his team shared about Singapore's healthcare system and primary care services, and gave the delegation a tour of the Polyclinic.

The visit concluded with a robust discussion on the progress of primary care in Singapore, including issues such as an ageing population.



△ Dr Evan Sim (front row, centre), Head of WDL Polyclinic, and his clinical team hosted delegates from Thailand's Ministry of Health.



△ Professor Philip Choo (centre), Group CEO of NHG and Dr Michael Yee (third from right), Director of Silverhope Clinic Pte Ltd, at the Hougang FMC's handover ceremony.

Witnessing the ceremony were Mrs Yee (left-most), A/Prof Chong Phui-Nah (second from left), CEO of NHGP and Primary Care, Mdm Kay Kuok (third from left), Chairman of NHG, and Dr Victor Teo (second from right), and Ms Ong Yipin (right-most), both Directors of Silverhope Clinic Pte Ltd.

HANDING OVER HOUGANG FMC

The National Healthcare Group (NHG) officially marked the transfer of ownership of Hougang Family Medicine Clinic (FMC) to Silverhope Clinic Pte Ltd, at a handover ceremony held on 13 September 2018.

Hougang FMC is the third and last FMC – after Ang Mo Kio FMC and Unity FMC – that NHG has handed over to private partners after successful collaborations.

During the three years of close collaboration, Hougang Polyclinic has referred more than 4,000 patients with chronic conditions to Hougang FMC.

YISHUN POLYCLINIC OFFICIALLY LAUNCHED

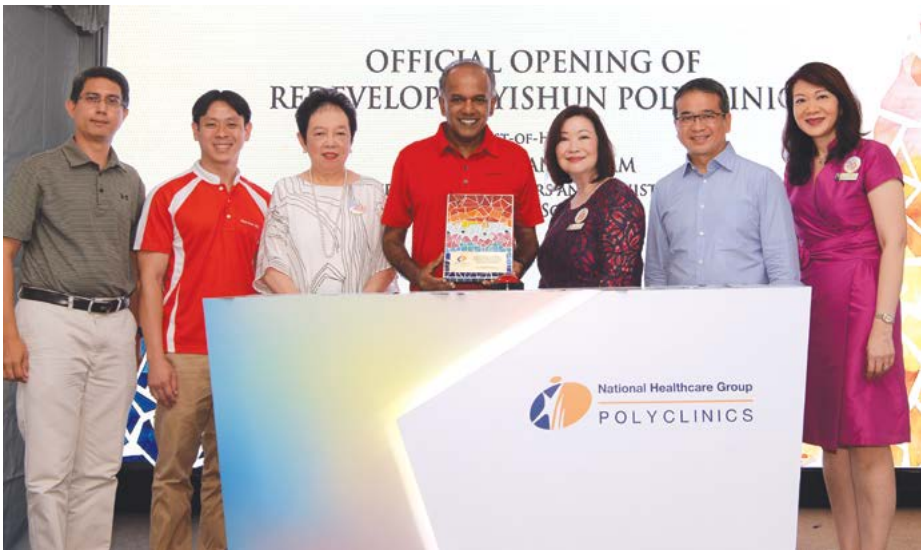


GOH, Mr K Shanmugam, with staff of Yishun Polyclinic at the entrance of the new polyclinic building.

NHGP commemorated its 20th year of serving the Nee Soon community with the official opening of redeveloped Yishun Polyclinic on 3 November 2018. Mr K Shanmugam, Minister for Home Affairs, Minister for Law, and Member of Parliament for Nee Soon GRC graced the event as the Guest-of-Honour (GOH).

About 100 NHGP staff, patients and community partners came together to create a mosaic community art piece, using stained glass and commonly used medical items such as vaccination bottle caps and medicine spoons. Titled 'Seasons of Life', the art piece was unveiled at the event together with senior management representatives from NHG and NHGP.

At the event, guests enjoyed a ukulele performance and a Latin Jive dance performance put up by the Nee Soon South Community Club and Chong Pang Community Club respectively. Invited guests also toured the new building to learn about its enhanced services, including an expanded Women and Children's Clinic and physiotherapy facility.



(From left) A/Prof Muhammad Faishal Ibrahim, Senior Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Social and Family Development and Ministry of Education & MP for Nee Soon GRC, Mr Louis Ng, MP for Nee Soon GRC, Mdm Kay Kuok, Chairman of NHG, Mr K Shanmugam, Minister for Home Affairs and Law & MP for Nee Soon GRC, Dr Kwan Pek Yee, Head of Yishun Polyclinic, Mr Edwin Tong, Senior Minister of State, Ministry of Health and A/Prof Chong Phui-Nah, CEO of NHGP and Primary Care.

EATING TO BETTER HEART HEALTH

In conjunction with this year's World Heart Day, NHGP's Health Promotion & Preventive Care (HPPC) department ran a series of educational roadshows on heart disease prevention in the month of September.

The roadshows, held at all NHG Polyclinics, were a result of a collaboration with Singapore Heart Foundation and Singapore Polytechnic's (SP) School of Chemical Life Sciences faculty.

Patients learnt how to eat healthily when dining out through interactive board games at the roadshow booths. SP students had developed these games under the HPPC team's guidance, as part of their final year project under the Diploma in Nutrition, Health and Wellness course.



Patients getting tips on eating healthily when dining out.

PROUD MOMENT

For the second year in a row, NHGP's Operations team has won the Hospital Management Asia Award. Held on 14 September 2018, the award ceremony saw NHGP walking away with the Excellence Award for the project titled 'Ancillary Staff Talent Management – Job Redesign Initiatives and Core Training Frameworks for Improved Service Delivery of Patient Care'. The project was selected from some 450 entries submitted by more than 100 healthcare institutions in Asia. Introduced in 2017, NHGP's framework aims to develop, upskill, and retain ancillary staff, achieve productivity and cost savings, and deliver greater value to patients.



Mr Ben Lau (left), Manager, Operations, receiving the award from A/Prof Luong Ngoc Khue, General Director of Administration of Medical Service, Ministry of Health, Vietnam.

HEALTH HERO

Walking more, avoiding cigarettes, and going for regular health screenings – these are the top three health tips from Ms Tan Sin Ying (SY). You may have seen the bubbly 22-year-old health promoter conducting healthy cooking demonstrations at the polyclinic or sharing the different types of health screening at some of our roadshows. We catch up with Sin Ying to find out more about her role.

7 WAYS TO KEEP MOVIN'!



Need a little motivation to exercise this festive season?

1. Brisk walk from the bus stop or MRT station to home.
2. Stand while watching TV.
3. Take the stairs.
4. Carry groceries.
5. Wash the car.
6. Do housework.
7. Go for family walks in the evening – you get to exercise while spending time with loved ones. Double win!



What is a typical day at work like?

SY: No two days are alike! I am usually out and about, either running a health promotion booth or demonstrating how to cook simple and nutritious meals at one of our polyclinics. I am also involved in facilitating health talks, workshops and activities for patients and their caregivers.

How do you keep yourself healthy while on the go?

SY: Keep moving! For example, I take the stairs instead of the lift.

Why did you decide to pursue this vocation?

SY: I've always been interested in health and nutrition. Choosing this job came naturally, as it allows me to share my passion and help others at the same time.



△ Sin Ying's role includes encouraging patients who visit the Health Promotion Booth to go for a health screening.

What are some of your biggest challenges at work?

SY: Many patients don't have the habit of going for regular health screening (including cancer screening). Thus, I have to constantly remind and reiterate its importance to them. Others are resistant to changing their eating habits, thinking that healthy food is always boring or bland. We try to change their perception by getting them to sample the healthy and delicious dishes prepared during our cooking demonstrations.

I truly hope that this encourages them to take the first step – be it to go for a health screening, or to give healthier food options a chance.

How do I know if I qualify to be a Health Promoter? Could you share with me the pre-requisites?

SY: Good communication skills are a must! It also helps if you enjoy interacting with others. You should also be a firm believer in leading a healthy lifestyle.

What are some misconceptions that people have about your job?

SY: Sometimes, I get mistaken as a sales promoter when I am conducting cooking demonstrations!

Complete this sentence: The best part of my job is...

SY: I am able to educate the public on the importance of healthy living. Those who attend my healthy cooking demonstrations are empowered to make small but meaningful changes to their eating habits. It really makes my day when patients or their family members return and recount their positive experiences with me.

"Those who attend my healthy cooking demonstrations are empowered to make small but meaningful changes to their eating habits."