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20 Years
Better Healthcare Together

Transforming PRIMARY CARE

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20 YEARS
BETTER HEALTHCARE TOGETHER

20 BREAKTHROUGH MOMENTS IN NHGP'S HISTORY

CARING FOR THE SILVER GENERATION

THROUGH THICK & THIN

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Drawing on our experiences with SARS, H1N1, and Zika, we are confident that our resilience and teamwork will see us through this latest challenging episode, as we have done in the past.

NHGP'S 20TH ANNIVERSARY:

COURAGE
IN THE FACE OF UNCERTAINTY

"Courage is resistance to fear, mastery of fear – not absence of fear."
Mark Twain

We woke up to 2020 with trepidation, faced with uncertainty of an ever-evolving threat nobody knew enough about, but which was knocking on our door. As Singapore faces its first infectious disease outbreak of the new decade, the National Healthcare Group Polyclinics (NHGP) stands ready, shoulder to shoulder, with courage.

With the appearance of COVID-19, NHGP has responded swiftly and decisively to ensure the safety and well-being of our patients, our staff and the communities we serve. Drawing on our experiences with SARS, H1N1, and Zika, we are confident that our resilience and teamwork will see us through this latest challenging episode, as we have done in the past.

Set against this backdrop and despite the challenges ahead, it is important for NHGP to commemorate our 20-year journey which we are marking this year. This issue of *Transforming Primary Care* is therefore dedicated to our hardworking and deeply-committed staff who have served tirelessly with courage and compassion. The feature article 'Through Thick and Thin' shares stories from eight of our long-serving staff who have stood together through both good times and bad. It is through such dedication and teamwork that NHGP has achieved many milestones, the most significant of which are featured in the segment, '20 Breakthrough Moments in NHGP's History'.

The year 2020 will also see NHGP marking a new milestone, with the opening of a new polyclinic in Kallang. This brings our network of polyclinics to seven, and serves as a timely reminder for NHGP to continue forging ahead in our journey to advance Family Medicine and transform primary healthcare.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank all our partners, past and present, who have journeyed with us this past 20 years. I look forward to more and stronger collaborations to improve population health.

In the meantime, let us all continue to be vigilant and do our part to keep our family, community and ourselves healthy. Here's to continued good health for all in 2020!



ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR CHONG PHUI-NAH
Chief Executive Officer
National Healthcare Group Polyclinics & Primary Care

20 BREAKTHROUGH MOMENTS in NHGP'S History

01 ELECTRONIC MEDICAL RECORDS SYSTEM

Implemented in 2005, the Electronic Medical Records (EMR) System allowed for the automation of traditional manual and time-consuming tasks for better, faster and safer primary healthcare for patients.



02 SELF-SERVICE KIOSKS

In 2007, Self-Registration Kiosks were introduced at all polyclinics to improve patient flow. A patient itinerary is provided to give patients an overview of what to expect at their next visit, as well as the approximate waiting time. In 2013, Self-Payment Kiosks were introduced, allowing patients to pay their medical bills more conveniently. The kiosks were enhanced in 2018 to allow patients to book future appointments, and also accept a wider variety of payment modes, including cash, Apple Pay and Samsung Pay.

ONLINE APPOINTMENT SYSTEM

NHGP introduced an Online Appointment System (OAS) on its corporate website in 2015. Patients can book same-day appointments to seek treatment for acute conditions, view and monitor existing appointments for care services as well as reschedule appointments like labs and doctor consultations.

03

ONE-QUEUE SYSTEM

Patients used to have to take multiple queue numbers when visiting the polyclinic, for example a number for consultation and another number for medication collection at the pharmacy. In 2018, a One-Queue System was implemented to make this process simpler for patients. Patients now use the same queue number throughout their visit at all NHG Polyclinics.

04

05 TELE-RADIOLOGY SERVICES

NHGP was the first in Singapore to introduce Tele-Radiology services at Ang Mo Kio Polyclinic in 2005. Tele-Radiology services allow digital imaging and transmission of images such as X-rays, CT and MRI scans to aid in diagnosis. With Tele-Radiology services, clinicians are able to access high quality detailed reports rapidly - a mere one hour. This is especially effective in cases requiring urgent care.

06 FAMILY PHYSICIAN CLINIC

The first Family Physician Clinic was launched in Ang Mo Kio Polyclinic in May 2005, and has since been established in all NHG Polyclinics. Family Physician Clinics were introduced as part of NHGP's strategy to tackle chronic diseases and introduce differentiation of services in order to provide a higher level of care. At the Family Physician Clinic, patients with chronic illness are treated by a senior doctor with postgraduate qualifications in Family Medicine.

OUTPATIENT PHARMACY AUTOMATION SYSTEM

Since 2014, the Outpatient Pharmacy Automation System (OPAS) has been implemented at NHG Polyclinics to enhance medication safety for patients. OPAS makes use of bar code and Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) technology to increase accuracy of medication picking. OPAS also enables better use of trained manpower for patient care by relieving pharmacists from manual tasks so that they can dedicate more time to patient education, research and medication reconciliations.

07





08 FAMILY MEDICINE CLINICS

NHGP opened Singapore's first Family Medicine Clinic (FMC) in Ang Mo Kio in May 2013. This public-private partnership provides integrated and comprehensive care for patients in the community. Subsequently, two other FMCs were opened – Unity FMC at Serangoon Central and Hougang FMC at Ci Yuan Community Club. By 2018, all three FMC have been officially handed over to private General Practitioner partners after successful collaborations.







TEAMLET CARE MODEL

In 2015, NHGP introduced a relationship-focused, team-based model of care for chronic disease management. This care model assigns patients with chronic conditions to a regular team, called a Teamlet, which comprises two Family Physicians, a Care Manager, a Care Coordinator and Allied Health Professionals. A study on patients enrolled under the teamlet care model showed that patients taken care of by a Teamlet demonstrated significant improvement in chronic disease management and participation in preventive health screenings.

09



WHEELCHAIR TILTER

In 2018, the redeveloped Ang Mo Kio Polyclinic became the first polyclinic in Singapore to have a wheelchair tilter in its dental clinic. With the tilter, patients can now receive treatment directly from their wheelchairs and no longer need to be transferred to a dental chair.

10



11 MEDICATION CLINIC

To improve the transition of care from patients discharged from hospital to primary care, NHGP and NHG Pharmacy set up the Medication Clinic in 2017. The pharmacist-led Medication Clinic serves to review patients' medication, especially if they have been prescribed various medications across multiple healthcare institutions. Using a system known as Patients' Medication List, pharmacists help to increase patient awareness and adherence to their medication. The Medication Clinic is also helpful in reducing medication errors and preventable adverse drug events during the transition of care.

12 GUIDING HANDS VOLUNTEER PROGRAMME

Founded in 2011, volunteers of the Guiding Hands Volunteer Programme support NHGP's various clinics and help patients and caregivers in meaningful roles such as care navigation, health advocacy and physical assistance. The Guiding Hands Volunteer Programme has enhanced the health literacy of volunteers and patients who in turn spread their knowledge in the community, contributing towards healthcare activation where everyone takes personal ownership of their health.





13 MOBILE BONE MINERAL DENSITOMETRY SERVICE

In 2012, NHG Diagnostics launched Singapore's first Mobile Bone Mineral Densitometry (BMD) service to provide accessible and affordable osteoporosis screening in the primary care setting. The Mobile BMD is equipped with a best-in class Dual Energy X-ray absorptiometry (DEXA) technology unit, which captures bone scans of both the lower spine and the hip. The two Mobile BMDs are available at Ang Mo Kio Polyclinic, Geylang Polyclinic, Woodlands Polyclinic and Yishun Polyclinic.

14 PRIMARY CARE ACADEMY

The Primary Care Academy (PCA) was established in 2007 to train primary healthcare professionals collectively under one roof. To raise patient service and care standards of clinic assistants at General Practitioner (GP) practices, the PCA also runs training workshops conducted by nurses and pharmacists. These workshops equip GP clinic assistants to provide greater quality of care to patients, such as assisting patients in infection control, the use of nebulisers and even assisting doctors with electrocardiograms.



15





PRIMARY CARE FORUM

NHGP organised its first Primary Care Forum (PCF) in 2009 as a satellite conference of the NHG Annual Scientific Meeting. Since 2010, the Primary Care Forum has been a stalwart showcase of primary care achievements as part of the annual Singapore Health and Biomedical Congress (SHBC).

Many international primary care experts from around the world have shared their wisdom and advice at PCF. To name a few, Professor Kevin Grumbach and Professor Kurt Stange from United States, Professor Chris Van Weel from Netherlands, Professor Roar Maagaard from Denmark and Professor Jan De Maeseneer from Belgium. NHGP's transformation journey has been keenly influenced by much of the thought-leadership provided at the forum across the years. NHGP's move to deliver care through teamlets to a panel of patients can be traced to the evidence from the work of Professor Kevin Grumbach while our Family Medicine Residency Programme has taken aboard greater primary care emphasis, that is aligned to overseas postgraduate Family Medicine training programmes as advocated by Professor Chris Van Weel and Professor Roar Maagaard.

16 FAMILY MEDICINE ACADEMY

With Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine as its primary partner, the Family Medicine Academy was launched in 2013 and was the first primary care training facility in the community for medical undergraduates in Singapore. At the Academy, students are exposed to a holistic understanding of the primary care setting from the first year of medical school.

17 SINGAPORE PRIMARY CARE RESEARCH SCIENTIFIC COMPETITION

Another milestone event linked to the Primary Care Forum was the inauguration of the Primary Care Research Scientific Competition in 2012. Organised to showcase the research of primary care clinicians, the Primary Care Research Scientific Competition has grown from strength to strength. In the last competition in 2019, the competition attracted 56 submissions. Topics from multi-morbidity to student engagement to wound care featured in the competition finals, highlighting the wide breadth of clinical interests amongst primary care clinicians.

18



FIRST PRIMARY HEALTHCARE MUSEUM IN SINGAPORE

Singapore's first museum on primary care was set up in 2002. Named the 'Gallery of Memories', it features medical equipment, vaccination records, handwritten prescription slips, nurse's handbooks and photographs from earlier times when maternal and child health was the foremost concern of the primary healthcare landscape. In 2018, the Gallery was revamped and re-launched at the redeveloped Ang Mo Kio Polyclinic.

19 FIRST PRIMARY CARE ADVANCED PRACTICE NURSE IN SINGAPORE

In 2005, Ms Ho Moon Liang was certified as NHGP's and Singapore's first Primary Care Advanced Practice Nurse (APN). Becoming an APN involves nurses participating in a two-year Master of Nursing programme, followed by a year's internship. APNs provide consultations, conduct physical examinations to diagnose and treat minor ailments, order and interpret diagnostic tests, and furnish medications according to protocol.



20 FIRST FAMILY PHYSICIAN WITH PHD IN FAMILY MEDICINE

Dr Lee Eng Sing, Family Physician, Senior Consultant, and Deputy Head of Clinical Research Unit is the first doctor in NHGP to be conferred a PhD in Family Medicine in 2019. In 2018, he received the inaugural Dr WM. Victor Johnston Award in Family Medicine given by Schulich School of Medicine and Dentistry at Western University, Canada.

Strategy for POPULATION HEALTH

AUTHORS: **Dr Wee Wei Keong**, Family Physician and Director, Health Promotion and Preventive Care Division / **Ms Soh Ying Hua** and **Ms Jayalakshmy Aarthi Ananthanarayanan**, Consultants, Health Promotion and Preventive Care Division

An integral part of our core mission at the National Healthcare Group Polyclinics (NHGP) is to improve health and reduce illness in the population. As NHGP continues on our journey to transform primary healthcare in Singapore, with a renewed emphasis on holistic team-based care for patients with chronic diseases, health promotion and preventive care assumes an even more pivotal role. Going upstream to detect patients at risk of eventually developing chronic diseases, as well as those with undetected chronic diseases, is paramount, as early detection and targeted intervention ultimately produces better clinical outcomes.

Since NHGP's early days, it had also been apparent that our polyclinics are a natural place to systematically 'catch' at-risk patients and start relevant, contextualised health conversations with them. With health promotion and disease prevention identified as a key pillar of good primary care, NHGP has therefore designed systematic health promotion and disease prevention into our model of care. Health promotion and disease prevention services and programmes available for patients include systematic evidence-based cardiovascular risk screening and cancer screenings. Post-screening, at-risk screenees are systematically engaged and activated for therapeutic lifestyle changes, targeted intervention programmes and clinical follow-up.

Starting Relevant Healthcare Conversations in Our Polyclinics

Since 2014, NHGP's screening and health promotion strategies have evolved to become even more proactive, responsive and targeted. Leveraging our setting within the community, NHGP has worked with community partners to contextualise health promotion conversations, allowing for more systematic and targeted interventions.

Cardiovascular Risk Screening (CRS) is an example of how NHGP effectively identifies eligible patients in the community. CRS aims to detect cardiovascular risk factors, such as diabetes, high blood pressure and high cholesterol, early, among asymptomatic individuals. Targeted interventions are then provided to those at risk, because these risk factors and 'silent killers' account for the high prevalence of heart disease, stroke and cancers, which together, account for the bulk of disease burden and deaths in Singapore.

57,000
patients issued Faecal Immunochemical Test Kits since 2015

40,000
patients undertook Cardiovascular Risk Screening since 2014

14,000
patients identified under Tiered-Risk Interventions for Managing Weight since 2018

35%
of eligible patients completed a Mammogram Test (Annually)

28%
of eligible patients completed a Cervical Cancer Screening (Annually)

Using HealthCheck, a software application jointly developed and co-owned by NHGP and Nanyang Polytechnic, CRS drives opportunistic cardiovascular risk screening in NHGP by systematically flagging eligible polyclinic patients as they present themselves at our facilities. Flagging criteria are based on patients' age, existing disease profiles and screening frequency.

From 2014 till date, CRS has screened more than 40,000 people, of whom, almost half (44%) were found to have high fasting blood glucose levels and/or high blood pressure reading and/or high blood cholesterol levels. If not for CRS, these patients would not have been aware of their conditions. Almost one in three (30%) had risk factors such as smoking and excess weight. Nine of out ten patients (89%) of those screened and detected with significant issues returned for clinical follow-up. This high follow-up rate among those with clinical issues is critical as effective screening is predicated upon early intervention for good clinical outcomes.

Post-screening, Health Promoters in the clinics further engage patients, educating and linking them up with lifestyle modification programmes, as well as other resources and services. Where appropriate, arrangements and referrals for follow-up are also made. This systematic approach facilitates therapeutic lifestyle changes.

Aligned with the concept of opportunistic screening, NHGP has been proactive in offering evidence-based cancer screening to eligible patients based on their age and gender. These include colorectal, breast and cervical cancer screening. For early detection of colorectal cancer, NHGP has been issuing Faecal Immunochemical Test (FIT) kits. Since 2015, NHGP has issued over 57,000 FIT kits and is consistently one of the largest FIT kit distributers for Singapore Cancer Society. NHGP also systematically flags out eligible patients for cervical and breast cancer screenings.

Recognising that risk stratification is vital to identify the right level of care for specific groups of patients, NHGP has also launched the Tiered-Risk Interventions for Managing Weight (TRIM) at Ang Mo Kio Polyclinic in 2018, and thereafter at Woodlands Polyclinic in 2019. Since its inception, 14,000 patients have been identified under TRIM, of which close to 40% have been engaged in weight management conversations. Of those engaged, more than 70% either took up the recommended intervention programmes or were coached on health matters.



NHGP encourages its staff and patients to lead active, well-balanced lifestyles through health promotion activities in the workplace and the community.

> **"NHGP's strategy in health promotion is analogous to that of a kelong, where fish enter and are 'caught'. Similarly, we systematically detect health risks among our patients, and educate, empower and engage them for healthy lifestyle changes. This is part of NHGP's overall efforts to enhance healthcare delivery and empower patients to have greater ownership of their own health."**
>
> **Dr Wee Wei Keong**
> *Family Physician and Director, Health Promotion and Preventive Care Division*

Continuing Healthcare Conversations in the Community

While our clinics are a natural place to start the health conversation with our patients, the community is the natural place to continue that conversation. One such programme which facilities this is FitterLife. A community-based weight management programme administered by NHGP, the National Healthcare Group (NHG) and ActiveSG, FitterLife is aimed at helping individuals with weight issues (but without chronic diseases) lose weight safely in the community.

Outcomes of FitterLife

- 226 people (78%) attended at least 6 out of 12 sessions
- 173 people (59%) attended 9 out of 12 sessions and received a programme fee refund
  - Of this number, 137 people (79%) lost ≥ 1kg weight
  - 108 people (62%) lost ≥ 3% of baseline weight
  - 73 people (42%) lost ≥ 5% of baseline weight

Another programme, Lighter Life, is aimed at helping our overweight or obese patients (with chronic diseases) lose weight safely in the community. Launched in 2018 and comprising eight sessions (spanning six months), patients on Lighter Life are monitored and coached on exercise, eating and behaviour change lifestyle habits by a multi-disciplinary primary care team.

Both FitterLife and Lighter Life are a testament to NHGP's philosophy that health conversations can be continued beyond patients to the community. For its efforts, NHGP was recognised at the Asian Hospital Management Awards 2019, attaining the Excellence Award in Community Involvement.

In the years to come, NHGP will continue to play a key role in guiding and helping the community attain better population health.

Transforming Care THROUGH TELEHEALTH

AUTHORS: **Dr Karen Ng Ming Yann**, Family Physician, Senior Consultant and Director, Clinical Services / **Ms Chen Yee Chui**, Chief Nurse, Nursing Services / **Dr Kong Jing Wen**, Family Physician, Consultant & Head, Hougang Polyclinic / **Ms Yeo Loo See**, Deputy Director, Nursing Services / **Ms Lim Voon Hooi**, Deputy Director, Nursing Services

Over the past two decades, NHGP has been on a primary care transformation journey to achieve a future-ready primary care ecosystem – one that is sustainable, accessible and effective in improving population health. To achieve this, NHGP has harnessed technology as part of our care transformation, including Telehealth, to better serve our patients and community. This move is aligned to the Infocomm Media 2025 Masterplan, which identifies technology as a key lever to enable the elderly and patients with chronic illnesses to proactively monitor their health at home.

Since NHGP's early days, remote health monitoring, consultations and diagnosis have been in place at our clinics, offering patients greater convenience and improved accessibility to medical care. Over time, Telehealth at NHGP evolved beyond offering just services for management of diseases. It began to broaden its scope to bring more value to patients. Over and above achieving efficiencies such as time- and cost-savings, NHGP's Telehealth initiatives looked at improving patient education, self-sufficiency and empowerment. (Learn more about NHGP's Telehealth journey in the milestone diagram below).

"A MORE CONCERTED TELEHEALTH DRIVE WILL EMPOWER PATIENTS BY GIVING THEM CONVENIENT AND TIMELY ACCESS TO SERVICES, AND ENABLE OUR TEAMLETS TO MONITOR PATIENTS MORE CLOSELY, ALLOWING FOR MORE PERSONALISED AND HOLISTIC CARE."

Dr Karen Ng,
Family Physician, Senior Consultant and Director, Clinical Services



GROWING NHGP'S TELEHEALTH EXPERTISE

2005
Tele-Radiology
Reduced patients' waiting times for X-ray reports from a few days to an hour.

2009
Tele-ECG
Allowed Family Practitioners to seek a cardiologist's opinion for asymptomatic patients with abnormal ECGs more quickly.





2013
Tele-Consultation
Enabled chronic patients to remain independent in their own homes through standardised care plans, whilst being monitored by Care Managers (registered nurses trained in chronic disease management).

2016
Tele-DERM
Enabled patients to receive appropriate specialist care for dermatological conditions more accessibly in a primary care setting.



2017
Tele-Wound Monitoring
Allowed patients to care for their wounds while the nurses continue to monitor the wound remotely.

2019
Primary Tech-Enhanced Care Hypertension Management Pilot
Enabled a selected group of patients from Ang Mo Kio Polyclinic with hypertension to monitor and manage their condition, with remote support from an SMS chatbot and a care team.

Leveraging Technology for Better Care Delivery

Take the **Tele-Consultation** service led by NHGP's Nursing Services. Patients with stable diabetes mellitus, hypertension, or lipid disorders without complications can submit their home-monitoring readings of glucose levels (if diabetic), blood pressure, and weight through a secure Internet portal. They can also consult Care Managers over the phone on issues such as post-insulin titration and medication refills, instead of having to visit the polyclinic for face-to-face consultations.

This has enabled patients with stable chronic conditions to remain independent in their own homes through standardised care plans and advice from the Care Managers. To date, these patients are well-controlled with no reports of hypotension, hypoglycaemia, uncontrolled hypertension or diabetic ketoacidosis. The take-up rate for the Tele-Consultations service has been positive, with more than 4,500 Tele-Consultations conducted in 2019. Patients who have participated in this service include both the elderly and working adults.

NHGP's Telehealth services have also increased access to specialist care. One of these is the award-winning **Tele-DERM** service jointly launched by NHGP and the National Skin Centre (NSC) in 2016. The service is part of NHGP's efforts to offer patients coordinated care by specialists in the community.

Tele-DERM enables patients to receive appropriate specialist care in a more accessible manner, within the community. Through a secure web portal, NHGP Family Physicians discuss skin care cases and treatment options with NSC dermatologists. This reduces the need for referrals to NSC.

About 85% of about 10,000 patients who visit NHGP monthly for dermatology-related conditions were treated at the polyclinic level. As of December 2019, more than 5,000 dermatology cases have been reviewed under Tele-DERM. The service won the *IT Excellence: Beyond Hospital to Community Award* at the 2017 National Health IT Excellence Awards.

Beyond convenience, NHGP's Telehealth services also empower patients to self-care while also ensuring that care is still provided to patients when they have returned home. **Tele-Wound Monitoring** is one such example. First piloted in 2016 and established at six polyclinics since mid-2017, the service enables remote wound monitoring and self-management.

Under Tele-Wound Monitoring, patients whose wounds have a relatively lower risk of infection, such as post-surgical wounds, or superficial pressure injuries with good blood flow, are taught how to perform wound dressing on their own and care for their wounds at home. Patients can then send images of their wounds to the clinical team via email, allowing the nurses to keep an eye on the healing process. Any necessary follow-up care is subsequently conducted over the phone, reducing the need for polyclinic visits.

In 2019, more than 1,000 patients were enrolled into NHGP's Tele-Wound Monitoring Service. These patients saved a total of close to 2,000 physical visits to the polyclinics for wound care.

WHAT IS TELEHEALTH?

Telehealth is the use of telecommunication and information technology to provide clinical healthcare.

WHY TELEHEALTH?

1. Provides patients with better access to care by bringing care within reach of more people
2. Allows healthcare providers to enhance the efficiency of their services
3. Optimises resources to overcome manpower constraints in the healthcare sector



"THE BEAUTY OF TELEHEALTH IS THAT THESE SERVICES CAN MEET PATIENT NEEDS ALMOST ANYWHERE AND AT ANY TIME. TELEHEALTH IMPROVES COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATION BETWEEN HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS, EMPOWERS NURSES AND MOST IMPORTANTLY, IMPROVES PATIENT OUTCOMES."

Ms Chen Yee Chui,
Chief Nurse, Nursing Services





Caring for the SILVER GENERATION

AUTHOR: **Dr David Ng Wei Liang**,
Family Physician, Consultant and Head,
Special Projects (Primary Care)

Living until the age of 100 is rapidly becoming a reality for Singaporeans, whose life expectancy has gone up by three years every decade since the country's independence. In 1970, 65-year olds could expect to live an average of 8 more years. In 2019, this number increased to 20 years. If this trend continues, life expectancy for Singaporeans will hit 100 by 2070.

That said, this trend comes with major implications. A growing number of people will spend the last ten years of their lives with illness or infirmities. Research shows that someone born in 2017 will live an estimated 12.5 per cent of his or her life in ill health, compared to 11.8 per cent for a person born in 1990.[1]

This in turn, leads to a corresponding increase in the prevalence of chronic diseases such as diabetes, hypertension and complications such as ischaemic heart disease and stroke. Age-related medical conditions such as dementia and frailty will also become increasingly common, with primary care professionals often being the first point of contact for managing individuals with these conditions.

Bolstering Care for our Seniors

In line with this, NHGP has made concerted efforts in the past two decades to create a culture of health, as part of seeking to prevent or delay the onset of conditions related to ageing.

For instance, the **Ageing-in-Place Studio** at Toa Payoh Polyclinic was established as a mock-up apartment for the public to engage in and learn more about fall prevention, home safety, and elder-friendly features. Apart from raising awareness of the possible risks in the home, it also instills confidence and independence in older people by equipping them with the knowledge in how to manage them.

To help initiate conversations about care and end-of-life issues, NHGP also launched **Advance Care Planning (ACP) Clinics** in Ang Mo Kio and Toa Payoh Polyclinics in 2017. These clinics, run by trained ACP facilitators, help guide conversations on a plan of care in the event of unexpected critical illness.

Additionally, **Memory Clinics** have also been running since 2012 to address the growing problem of age-related dementia. First piloted in Ang Mo Kio Polyclinic, every polyclinic in NHGP now has a Memory Clinic that caters to the needs of patients with memory problems and dementia.

[1] *A study done by the Ministry of Health (MOH) in collaboration with the United States-based Institute of Health Metrics and Evaluation in 2019.*



The multi-disciplinary team spearheading NHGP's Frailty Programme.

Frailty Screening in Primary Care

Another significant issue to address in the elderly is frailty. Frailty is the loss of physiological reserves marked by symptoms such as unintentional weight loss and slowness in walking. Frail adults are at an increased risk of falls, disability and hospital admissions. In Singapore, 6.2% of older adults were found to be frail, and another 37% were pre-frail.

Cognisant of this, NHGP, together with the Silver Generation Office and the Community Network for Seniors, has been working on a **Frailty Screening Programme** for the elderly.

Patients who are identified to be pre-frail and frail are educated on how to prevent adverse health outcomes through appropriate nutrition, fall prevention measures and home exercises. Patients with milder degrees of frailty are referred to community exercise programmes run by the People's Association and Health Promotion Board through the Community Network for Seniors.

For frail adults with more complex dietary restrictions or physical limitations, NHGP's care team, comprising doctors, nurses, dietitians and physiotherapists, provide individualised advice to help patients better manage their condition.

> **"These measures, both at the primary care as well as community level, work together to form a comprehensive eco-system of care to holistically support our senior citizens. NHGP's goal is to keep our seniors active, healthy and independent so that they can age in place with dignity in their communities and homes."**
>
> **Dr David Ng,**
> *Family Physician, Consultant and Head, Special Projects (Primary Care)*



AT A GLANCE: NHGP'S FRAILTY SCREENING PROGRAMME

Pilot implemented at Toa Payoh Polyclinic

By December 2019,
>1,000 patients
screened

Of this, close to half (46%) were identified as frail, and
6 out of 10
identified as pre-frail

Through THICK & THIN



Being a Family Physician at Hougang Polyclinic has brought me many memorable experiences. Besides managing patients with acute and chronic conditions, I also perform minor surgery and run the Memory Clinic. A major highlight of my NHGP journey was definitely the Dinner & Dance in 2014, where a team of nurses and I dressed as characters from the musical *Les Misérables* in costumes we got from Salvation Army. We performed 'One Day More' and won Best Costume for the night. I hope NHGP will continue to be a vital component in every Singaporean's life from infant-care to elderly-care.

Dr Marvin Chan
Family Physician & Associate Consultant,
Hougang Polyclinic

It has been exciting for me to be part of a new team, where the feedback unit was transformed into Service Leadership & Patient Relations (SLPR) Department in 2011. The department goes beyond daily feedback management to adding value in building a person-centred service culture through a suite of iCARE programmes. We witnessed service improvement with patient satisfaction scores increasing steadily from 78% in 2012 to 92% at the inaugural MOH Patient Experience Survey in 2017. Over the years, my role has been expanded to include delivering compliments of appreciative patients to the clinic management which never fails to cheer and motivate the named staff and clinic team. I am glad and proud to be in SLPR team, making a positive difference to our staff, patients and their caregivers.

Ms Alinah Binte Idris
Senior Executive Assistant,
Service Leadership & Patient Relations Department



As a nurse in NHGP, I play a variety of roles. I provide diabetic foot screening, health counselling and women's health screening for patients. Educating patients on the prevention of diabetic foot complications is one of the many important roles I play. The Losartan drug recall was a trying moment for polyclinics. With patience and good collaboration, our team was able to manage the situation smoothly. It is a privilege to celebrate NHGP's 20th anniversary and touching more lives in the future!

Ms Fadzilah Binte Mansor
Senior Staff Nurse,
Geylang Polyclinic

Previously, patients only had the option of walking-in to clinics for dental consultations. We understand the importance of a seamless and convenient patient-care experience. Now, patients are provided with better facilities and a more systematic operations as compared to the early years. It has been a fulfilling 20 years in Toa Payoh Polyclinic working alongside supportive and caring colleagues. One of my highlights is looking forward to Christmas gift exchanges amongst the team. I am also grateful for the support given by NHGP through flexible work arrangements as I continue to work part-time and still have some downtime for myself.

Ms Zirstina Teo Kim Tho
Senior Dental Assistant,
Toa Payoh Polyclinic

Through THICK & THIN



I started my journey in Yishun Polyclinic once I obtained my Master's degree in Family Medicine back in 2000. Since then, NHGP has supported me personally and professionally. I am heartened to see how Family Medicine has advanced and grown through the years, achieving excellence in patient care. Yishun Polyclinic started out with a few Family Physicians and has since expanded to having more than 30 Family Physicians currently. There had also been an increasing interest in the field of Family Medicine for residency training over the years. Having recently completed a Master of Health Professions Education Singapore (MPHE-S), I will continue to support NHGP in mentoring the next generation of Family Physicians. I wish NHGP the best in advancing Primary Care!

Dr Angelia Chua
Family Physician and Consultant,
Yishun Polyclinic

As a Patient Care Assistant, I mainly assist the doctors in checking the patients' blood pressure and attending to their needs in treatment rooms daily. I am grateful for the opportunities and trainings that NHGP has provided me over the last 20 years. It is also heart-warming to know that I have gained a family doing what I enjoy especially working alongside supportive and caring colleagues in Toa Payoh Polyclinic!

Ms Manonmany D/O Adimulam
Patient Care Assistant,
Toa Payoh Polyclinic

It has been an insightful journey with NHGP the past 20 years. My role is to primarily help out in serving patients at the registration and payment counters in Woodlands Polyclinic. I enjoy being in the patient care industry, where I am constantly growing and exposed to different trainings and medical knowledge. The main difference is definitely incorporating various technological advancements into our workflow as well as being equipped with better facilities over the years. It has been great to see how far we have come. I wish that NHGP will continue to advance primary care in this new digital age!

Ms S. Vanidah
Patient Service Associate,
Woodlands Polyclinic

My aim is to always deliver the best patient care experience by having good collaborations between staff and departments. In doing so, we share practices that promote better productivity within the team, which will eventually affect the quality of our patient care. I fondly remember being involved in creating props for the various Dinner & Dance performances over the years. However, the most memorable experience in NHGP was presenting a memento to Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong who was our Guest of Honour for the official opening of Ang Mo Kio Polyclinic back in 2018. The quilt design of a tree was to signify the strong bond and collaboration between the Ang Mo Kio Polyclinic team, patients and partners.

Ms Ow Yue Peng
Senior Midwife,
Ang Mo Kio Polyclinic

Our Polyclinics

Take a look at how our six polyclinics have developed and changed over the years.

ANG MO KIO

Did you know Ang Mo Kio Polyclinic is the first polyclinic in Singapore to have a wheelchair tilter in its Dental Clinic? With the tilter, patients can now receive treatment directly from their wheelchairs and no longer have to be transferred to a dental chair.





Ang Mo Kio Polyclinic in 2003 after its major refurnishment



Ang Mo Kio Polyclinic in 1981

GEYLANG

Did you know Geylang Polyclinic is the newest member to the NHGP family? It joined us in 2017 from SingHealth after the reclustering of Singapore's public healthcare system.





HOUGANG

Hougang Polyclinic is the first polyclinic to provide Tele-DERM services to patients. With this collaboration between NHGP and the National Skin Centre (NSC), patients can receive specialist skin care closer to the community.





Hougang Polyclinic in 1991

TOA PAYOH

Toa Payoh Polyclinic has a unique feature not present in other polyclinics - an Ageing-in-Place Studio. This studio has been modelled after a one-room HDB flat which serves as an educational show-room to educate elderly and caregivers on how to make homes safer.





Toa Payoh Polyclinic in 1988

YISHUN

Yishun Polyclinic was redeveloped to have more lush greenery and also has various sky terraces to provide patients with a healing environment.





Yishun Polyclinic was relocated to a temporary site in 2012



Yishun Polyclinic in 1998

WOODLANDS

Not known to many, but did you know that one of our attending doctors had delivered a baby boy in Woodlands Polyclinic?





Woodlands Polyclinic in 1993

past present *future*

"Congratulations to NHGP for 20 years of leadership in primary care! NHG Pharmacy's management and staff appreciate your support and partnership in our shared journey to improve patients' health."

MS CHAN SOO CHUNG
NHG Pharmacy
Executive Director

"My heartiest congratulation on your 20th anniversary! The National Healthcare Group Polyclinics have played an important role in transforming primary care, which is the bedrock of our healthcare system. Over the years, the NHGP team has demonstrated innovativeness by developing new care models and continuously strived for excellence so as to provide better care for patients. I look forward to your continued contributions in building a quality and sustainable healthcare system for Singapore."

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR KENNETH MAK
Ministry of Health
Director of Medical Services

"NHGP, you are doing a great job. The staff members are warm and knowledgeable, helpful to all, especially to the frail and elderly who visited the clinics. My heartiest congratulations for services well done! Happy 20th Birthday!"

MS JESSIE PEH
Guiding Hands Volunteer

"NHG Polyclinics has been a key partner of NHG Diagnostics, supporting our innovative initiatives to transform diagnostic delivery in primary care. This has enabled more services to be right-sited in polyclinics to better patient care management. On behalf of NHG Diagnostics, I would like to congratulate NHG Polyclinics for achieving 20 years of excellence in transforming primary care in Singapore. I look forward to many more years of partnership."

MS LIM SOH HAR
NHG Diagnostics
Executive Director

"Congratulations to NHGP colleagues on your 20th anniversary! NHGP is certainly one of Healthcare's trail blazers and IHiS looks forward to supporting NHGP for decades to come in co-developing more innovative solutions to advance health services."

MR BRUCE LIANG
Ministry of Health
Chief Information Officer &
Integrated Health Information Systems (iHiS)
Chief Executive Officer

"We are delighted to partner with NHGP in bringing care closer to the community by being Singapore's first eldercare service provider to be co-sited in a polyclinic at Ang Mo Kio. St Luke's ElderCare wishes NHGP the very best as we collaborate to transform primary and community care together."

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR KENNY TAN
St Luke's ElderCare
Chief Executive Officer

"Over the years, NHGP has built up a strong brand in Singapore for providing comprehensive, accessible and quality patient-centred care to the community. This would not have been possible without the commitment of NHGP's senior management and staff. I am confident that NHGP will continue to play a significant role in transforming the primary healthcare ecosystem in Singapore, and in advancing NHG's vision of 'Adding Years of Healthy Life'."

MDM KAY KUOK
National Healthcare Group
Chairman

"My heartiest congratulations to NHGP for achieving the 20th year milestone. NHGP has done remarkably well in transforming primary care through its proactive relationship-centred approach, horizontal integration with private GPs, and vertical integration with acute and community care providers. Your efforts have significantly improved patient satisfaction and health outcomes, and advanced population health in Singapore. You have made a big difference to the health and well-being of our community. I look forward to NHGP's continued leadership in the primary care ecosystem, and in spearheading new models of care, innovation and digital health to co-create an excellent healthcare system for our people."

PROFESSOR PHILIP CHOO
National Healthcare Group
Group Chief Executive Officer

"NHGP is an organisation we should be proud to be associated with. Since its inception, it has given comfort and empathy to many patients and improved their quality of lives. The volunteers have been given a 'locus standi' to volunteer. This is very important and we thank NHGP for it. The support and encouragement provided are certainly positive and it will propel NHGP to greater heights. I wish NHGP many more anniversaries on its 20th. Happy Anniversary NHGP!"

MR GOH PENG KHIM
Guiding Hands Volunteer

"Congratulations to NHGP on this significant milestone! It has been a pleasure to have NHGP as one of our partners, benefiting the elderly residents and clients under our care. We look forward to many more years of collaboration, and wish NHGP continued growth ahead."

MR SAMUEL TAN
All Saints Home
Chief Executive Officer

"Our heartiest congratulations to NHGP for playing a pivotal role in transforming our primary care services for the past 20 years to better suit the needs of the patients. We commend its leadership and all its employees' collective commitment, dedication and innovation to provide a comprehensive range of quality health services in an affordable and accessible way to our patients. Kudos to the team for its relentless pursuit to adding years of healthy life to the people of Singapore. Happy 20th anniversary NHGP!"

MS K THANALETCHIMI
Healthcare Services Employees' Union
President

"NHGP is a valued partner for LKCMedicine. We are working together closely on areas that are important for Singapore's health landscape, such as population health and family medicine. These areas cover Singaporeans' health and medical care across the lifespan. We look forward to continuing our productive and collaborative partnership with NHGP. Congratulations on your 20th Anniversary!"

PROFESSOR JAMES BEST
Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine
Dean, Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine,
NTU-Imperial Joint Medical School

"Happy Anniversary! NHGP has been instrumental in advancing family medicine and transforming our primary healthcare in Singapore. Thank you for your partnership with AIC to build a vibrant care community and enabling our people to live well and age gracefully."

DR KOK MUN FOONG
Agency for Integrated Care
Chief, Primary Care Division,
Home First Group

"Thank you to NHGP for being such an energetic and passionate partner to HPB as we develop and mainstream ideas to promote healthy lifestyles – in particular in the areas of cancer screening and smoking cessation. We look forward to our continued partnership with NHGP."

MR ZEE YOONG KANG
Health Promotion Board
Chief Executive Officer

"Congratulations on your 20th anniversary from all of us at MOHTH. We value your efforts at delivering healthcare in the community and wish you all success in keeping our nation healthy."

TEAM FROM MOH HOLDINGS
MOH Holdings

"Heartiest congratulations to NHGP for 20 years of delivering quality primary healthcare with patients right at the heart of what you do. May your commitment to innovation and transformation continue to see you growing from strength to strength in contributing to the health and wellness of more people in the community."

TEAM FROM MOHT FUTURE PRIMARY CARE
MOH Office for Healthcare Transformation

"NHGP is the most proactive in outreach to community doctors. Appreciate the sustained efforts and various initiatives."

DR ENG SOO KIANG
Unity Family Medicine Clinic
Clinical Lead, Central-North Primary Care Network



HAND *in* HAND

Thanks For Partnering Us In Our Journey Over The Past 20 Years!

A Member of the
National Healthcare Group

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