

TRIPARTITE COLLABORATION TO BOOST PALLIATIVE CARE RESEARCH & EDUCATION

New Centre to develop capabilities to integrate Palliative Care into Healthcare Spectrum

3 October 2017

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

To bolster capability and capacity to support end-of-life care in Singapore, the, National Healthcare Group (NHG) and Nanyang Technological University (NTU) and Dover Park Hospice (DPH) will be signing a Memorandum of Understanding to form **The Palliative Care Centre for Excellence in Research and Education (PalC)**. Leveraging on the strengths and resources of member institutions, namely Tan Tock Seng Hospital (TTSH), NTU's medical school the Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine (LKCMedicine) and DPH, the tripartite collaboration builds on existing partnerships¹ and will combine clinical expertise with academic and research excellence, to produce practical applications within the community.

A key focus would be the development of more effective prognostic tools for non-cancer patients at the end-of-life, such as those suffering from end-stage organ failure² (ESOF). With Singapore's growing chronic disease burden, the prevalence of end organ disease is expected to rise. In 2015 alone, ESOF accounted for about 33 per cent of 5,368 deaths³ within the NHG patient pool. That same year, ESOF accounted for 43 per cent of deaths in patients above 60 at TTSH.

"Patients suffering from end organ diseases experience declining health interspersed with brief periods of stability, making their prognosis difficult to predict. Not only does this potentially limit their access to palliative care but for patients and families, this unpredictability also makes the end of life journey even more stressful," said Dr Allyn Hum, Director of PalC and Senior Consultant at the Palliative Care Department, TTSH. "The Centre aims to address this knowledge gap by facilitating research and education to provide evidence-based practical applications for healthcare providers, and to improve the provision of disease specific, needs-based palliative care for patients and their caregivers."

In addition to boosting palliative care research, the Centre will also develop training and education programmes to better equip current and future generations of doctors, nurses, social workers, allied health professionals and volunteers with the skills to help patients live their final days with dignity.

¹ DPH and TTSH, with support from Temasek Cares launched Programme Dignity in 2014 – a home palliative care service for patients with dementia. NHG is the clinical training partner for LKCMedicine

² Includes kidney, heart and lung failure

³ Patients above 60-years-old

“We want to make palliative care an integral part of our healthcare system to ensure that wherever patients choose to spend their last days, they can spend them in comfort and with dignity. With some three-quarters of doctors and almost half of all nurses feeling under-equipped to deal with end-of-life issues, the new Centre will provide specialised training to equip them with the right skills to support patients. In addition, the Centre will further research into end-of-life care delivery and planning to contribute back to the healthcare system,” said Professor James Best, Dean of LKCMedicine.

“The end of life is an inevitable part of our lives yet many are unprepared when it comes,” said Mr Timothy Liu, CEO, DPH. “We believe this collaboration will further research into care models, particularly in the community and enhance training for healthcare professionals, caregivers and volunteers, and better enable them with the knowledge and skills on end-of-life care and options to support families with loved ones who wish to spend their last days at home whenever possible.”

“As NHG works towards fulfilling its role as a Regional Health System for Singapore, one of our key goals is to provide more effective palliative care and to give those at the end-of-life a dignified end in the community,” said Professor Philip Choo, Group CEO, NHG. “Healthcare professionals must have the heart, passion and empathy to cultivate trust and build relationships with our patients and partners. When they know we genuinely want to work together with them to achieve better outcomes, change will happen.”

The MOU will be inked at the opening ceremony of the Singapore Health and Biomedical Congress (SHBC) 2017 on 12 October.

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About Dover Park Hospice

Dover Park Hospice was founded in 1992 as a secular, non-profit organisation to meet the growing need in Singapore for hospice care for terminally-ill patients. It is Singapore's first purpose-built hospice, designed to provide a serene environment close to nature.

Dover Park Hospice was started by volunteers, and today volunteers continue to play an integral role in all aspects of hospice work, from patient care to social activities and administrative support. They are an important complement to the permanent staff, working together for patients and their families.

Open to everyone regardless of age, race, religion or income level, Dover Park Hospice is dedicated to meeting the unique physical, emotional and spiritual needs of those who are nearing the end of life's journey. The goal is to enhance the living, comfort the dying and support the grieving with compassion and dignity.

At Dover Park Hospice, Every Moment Matters. Since 1992, we have brought care and comfort to more than 11,000 terminally-ill patients and their families through a programme of active and compassionate service.

About National Healthcare Group

The National Healthcare Group (NHG) is a leader in public healthcare in Singapore, recognised at home and abroad for the quality of its medical expertise and facilities. Care is provided through an integrated network of **nine** primary healthcare polyclinics, acute care and tertiary hospitals, national specialty centres and business divisions. Together they bring a rich legacy of medical expertise to our philosophy of integrated patient-centred care. NHG's vision is "Adding Years of Healthy Life". This vision goes beyond merely healing the sick to the more difficult and infinitely more rewarding task of preventing illness and preserving health and quality of life.

With some **13,000** staff, NHG aims to provide care that is patient-centric, accessible, seamless, comprehensive, appropriate and cost-effective. As the Regional Health System (RHS) for Central Singapore, it is vital for NHG to partner and collaborate with stakeholders, community advisors, and voluntary welfare organisations. Together with our patients, their families and caregivers, we aim to deliver integrated healthcare services and programmes that help in Adding Years of Healthy Life to all concerned.

More information is available at www.nhg.com.sg.

About Nanyang Technological University

A research-intensive public university, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore (NTU Singapore) has 33,500 undergraduate and postgraduate students in the colleges of Engineering, Business, Science, Humanities, Arts, & Social Sciences, and its Interdisciplinary Graduate School. It has a new medical school, the Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine, set up jointly with Imperial College London.

NTU is also home to world-class autonomous institutes – the National Institute of Education, S Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Earth Observatory of Singapore, and Singapore Centre for Environmental Life Sciences Engineering – and various leading research centres such as the Nanyang Environment & Water Research Institute (NEWRI), Energy Research Institute @ NTU (ERI@N) and the Institute on Asian Consumer Insight (ACI).

Ranked 13th in the world, NTU has also been ranked the world's top young university for the last two years running. The University's main campus has been named one of the Top 15 Most Beautiful in the World. NTU also has a campus in Novena, Singapore's medical district.

For more information, visit www.ntu.edu.sg