

# MEDIA RELEASE

## SEMBAWANG POLYCLINIC OPENS IN BUKIT CANBERRA

*NHGP's first polyclinic, co-located in an integrated hub with community and social partners*

**Singapore, 25 November 2023** – The National Healthcare Group Polyclinics (NHGP) officially opened its eighth polyclinic, Sembawang Polyclinic, officiated by Mr Ong Ye Kung, Minister for Health. Located within Bukit Canberra, Sembawang Polyclinic offers patients and residents a range of health and social care services, through its partnership with co-located agencies in the integrated hub. As a one-stop healthcare centre, the polyclinic provides services such as acute and team-based chronic disease management, women and child health services, preventive healthcare, and integrated family support programmes, to meet the health and social needs of residents in the area.

2. Given Singapore's rising prevalence of chronic diseases and Healthier SG's focus on preventive care, Dr Karen Ng, Chief Executive Officer, NHGP believes that "Primary care is an important pillar of the healthcare system to keep individuals healthy, address preventive care needs and provide holistic, personalised care for patients across all ages. Extending NHGP's engagement beyond healthcare, Sembawang Polyclinic has actively partnered agencies co-located in Bukit Canberra to integrate health and social services. From developing individualised care plans with patients, to supporting families with young children; Sembawang Polyclinic has collaborated with community partners to build an ecosystem of support, empowering patients to take charge of their health and achieve their health goals."

### Improving Health through Strong Partnerships

3. A distinctive aspect of Sembawang Polyclinic is its location within a network of community and social partners who provide health and social support for patients to take proactive steps to manage their health, prevent the onset of chronic diseases and lead healthier lifestyles aligned with the Healthier SG initiative.

4. The strategic proximity of Sembawang Polyclinic to the Active Health Lab, which is run by Sport Singapore (SportSG), enables robust collaborations between the NHGP's care team and Active Health coaches. Through exercise prescription, the NHGP's care team helps patients develop their exercise goals and recommends programmes and referrals to the Active Health Lab. Active Health coaches will conduct a fitness and health assessment, and provide customised coaching to empower residents to make lifestyle changes to improve their health. This collaborative effort seeks to better support patients in achieving their health goals more holistically.

5. Starting from early 2024, NHGP, in collaboration with NParks, will offer mindfulness walks for patients from Sembawang Polyclinic. Mindful walking, especially in nature, is known to improve sleep, increase alertness, enhance mood and reduce psychological distress. These walks will be conducted at the therapeutic garden, located at Bukit Canberra as part of therapeutic horticulture activities to promote mental well-being.

### **Integrating Health and Social Services for Better Family Support**

6. To enhance the integration of health and social services, Sembawang Polyclinic will feature the first **Family Nexus** in the Central and Northern region of Singapore, in support of the Ministry of Health's Child and Maternal Health and Well-being Strategy. Family Nexus provides a one-stop health and social services hub, catering to families and families-to-be, from couples planning for marriage and parenthood to those with young children.

7. Being part of Sembawang Polyclinic, Family Nexus has the advantage of forging collaborations with the co-located agencies in Bukit Canberra integrated hub and other supporting agencies, with the aim of connecting patients and residents to their services and programmes. Under Family Nexus, NHGP collaborates with partners such as Care Corner Singapore, Families for Life (FFL) and Sport Singapore (SportSG) to offer complimentary programmes that aim to strengthen family bonds, equip parents with valuable parenting skills, nurture the emotional well-being of children and to provide a supportive network for families. These include the Purposeful Play Programme that helps children's development through play and common activities, early literacy for children, facilitated peer support group to help parents learn from the experiences of other families and a host of bonding activities and workshops for parents and children to partake. Children from families with health, social and financial issues will also be connected to NHGP's EMBRACE<sup>PLUS</sup> (**E**nhanced **M**aternal **B**aby **T**oddler **R** And **C**hild **S**urv**E**illance<sup>PLUS</sup>) programme.

8. EMBRACE<sup>PLUS</sup> takes a holistic approach to managing the care of the mother-child dyad and supports at-risk children aged 0 to 3 years old from low-income families, to help address their health, social and financial issues. Besides ensuring the completion of Childhood Developmental Screening (CDS) and childhood immunisations, the NHGP care team also identifies and addresses the medical, care and/or financial needs of mother/caregiver and child. In addition, mothers are screened for postnatal depression and receive follow-up care if they have a history of gestational diabetes. The NHGP care team also works with social and community partners, such as KidSTART, to provide a supportive ecosystem for continuity of care.

### **Patient Empowerment and Self-Management**

9. NHGP recognises the importance of innovations such as Tele-Health Consultations, that was first introduced in September 2013 as part of Tele-Health innovations. Since then, NHGP has conducted close to 380,000 Tele-Consultations, provided by doctors, nurses and Allied Health Professionals. A patient satisfaction survey showed that almost 90% of patients found Tele-Health services to be useful. The integration of Tele-Health services, as part of NHGP's Teamlet care model, provides patients with greater accessibility to healthcare services.

10. Strengthening patient empowerment through new innovations, Sembawang Polyclinic will be the first in NHGP to roll out the wheelchair-friendly weighing machine for patients with mobility needs. Patients who require their weight to be taken can remain in their wheelchairs while weighing themselves with ease, making weight measurements safe, effortless and convenient.

### **Engaging Patients and the Community in Health Promotion**

11. Apart from innovations, NHGP places strong emphasis on partnerships with patients and the community. To empower individuals to adopt practical healthy lifestyle habits, a **Health and Wellness Studio** located within the polyclinic will feature health promotion activities. These include resistance training fitness activities or cooking workshops with hands-on participation to educate on healthier cooking methods, such as the use of natural ingredients, like herbs, from the community garden located on the grounds of Bukit Canberra.

12. Recognising the importance of the patient's voice in care delivery, NHGP has set up the **Patient Advisory Council (PAC)** at Sembawang Polyclinic. Comprising volunteers who are patients and caregivers, the PAC works with the clinic management team to co-design and enhance the patient care journey in Sembawang Polyclinic.

13. At today's event, Minister Ong launched a community artpiece made up of more than a hundred hand-painted hexagon tiles and interwoven nautical ropes. Inspired by the heritage of Sembawang as a naval base, the artpiece is made up of more than a hundred hand-painted hexagon tiles with marine elements, and interwoven nautical ropes. Elements such as seashells, with their hard outer layer, symbolise resilience and determination of the team at Sembawang Polyclinic, while the interwoven nautical ropes represent Sembawang Polyclinic's collaboration with patients, partners and the community to build a stronger primary care network.

### **Conclusion**

14. Dr Irwin Chung, Family Physician, Associate Consultant, and Head of Sembawang Polyclinic shared, "The Sembawang community serves a large population of younger residents and families. Many of these residents are currently seeking care at Woodlands and Yishun Polyclinic. With the opening of the Sembawang Polyclinic today, residents now enjoy comprehensive health services closer to their homes. We look forward to partnering residents and patients to proactively manage their health, and together, build a Healthier Sembawang and a Healthier SG."

For more information, please refer to Annex A.

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### **About National Healthcare Group Polyclinics**

National Healthcare Group Polyclinics (NHGP) forms the primary healthcare arm of the National Healthcare Group (NHG). Its eight polyclinics serve a significant proportion of the population in the central and northern regions of Singapore.

NHGP provides a comprehensive range of health services for the family, functioning as a one-stop health service centre providing treatment for acute medical conditions, management of

chronic diseases, women & children services and dental care. The focus of NHGP's care is on health promotion and disease prevention, early and accurate diagnosis, disease management through physician led team-based care as well as enhancing the capability of Family Medicine through research and teaching.

Through the Family Medicine Academy and the NHG Family Medicine Residency Programme, NHGP plays an integral role in the delivery of primary care training at medical undergraduate and post-graduate levels. With the Primary Care Academy, NHGP provides training to caregivers and other primary care counterparts in the community sector.

More information is available at [www.nhgp.com.sg](http://www.nhgp.com.sg).

## ANNEX A: INFO ON PARTNERSHIPS, INNOVATIONS, INITIATIVES & PROGRAMMES

### **Partnerships with co-located agencies**

Located within the integrated hub of Bukit Canberra with community and social partners, Sembawang Polyclinic will partner with the co-located agencies including Sport Singapore (SportSG) and National Parks Board (NParks) to provide a range of health and social care services.

#### Active Health Lab

Active Health is an initiative under Sport Singapore (SportSG) which seeks to empower and motivate individuals to take ownership of their health and well-being, and to build strong social bonds and support through shared experiences. Supported by intentionally designed infrastructure and technology, the Active Health coaches provide personalised and evidence-based guidance to individuals at the Active Health Lab. The strategic proximity between Sembawang Polyclinic and Active Health Lab enables the clinic care team to seamlessly refer patients with exercise prescription to the Active Health coaches for appropriate interventions. The Active Health coaches conduct functional performance assessments for residents, and customised coaching on health and wellness. At the Labs, residents are encouraged to take small steps towards the necessary lifestyle changes such as exercising more or practising better sleep hygiene. Patients can also continue to improve their fitness independently at the ActiveSG gym facility. This collaborative effort effectively promotes a comprehensive approach to enhancing community health and wellness.

#### National Parks Board (NParks)

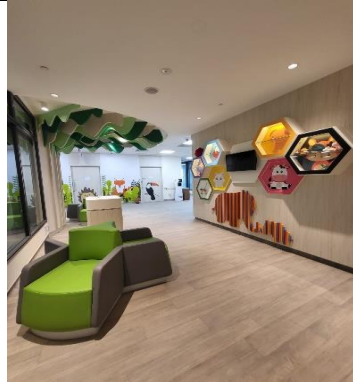
NHGP will work with NParks to co-organise a series of activities at the community garden and therapeutic garden, as well as Health and Wellness Studio located within the polyclinic. Through activities such as planting of herbs and spices at the community garden, and conducting healthy cooking workshops at the Health and Wellness Studio using herbs from the community garden as substitutes for flavour enhancers like salt, participants will learn to adopt natural, healthier flavouring options in food preparation, thereby encouraging them to adopt healthy eating habits. Participants will also get to experience the benefits of therapeutic landscapes at the rooftop therapeutic garden.



### **Health and Wellness Studio**

The Health and Wellness Studio at Sembawang Polyclinic is the second studio in NHGP. The studio serves as a dedicated space to support efforts in engaging, empowering and activating patients and the community towards adopting practical healthy lifestyle habits. It is a multipurpose facility where interactive healthy cooking workshops and small group exercise classes can be conducted. Together with the co-located agencies in Bukit Canberra hub, the studio will also host regular thematic events or activities relating to mental and social well-being, frailty prevention, disease preventive and healthy living, and maternal & child health.

To enable more patients to benefit from these health promoting activities, the studio has built in video recording and broadcast functions, so that activities in the studio can be live-streamed at the clinic waiting areas.



### **Family Nexus @ Bukit Canberra**

Family Nexus @ Bukit Canberra is the first Family Nexus located in the Central and Northern region in support of the Ministry of Health's Child and Maternal Health and Well-being Strategy. It provides one-stop health and social services hub, conveniently co-located within Sembawang Polyclinic to integrate health and social services and better support families in the region.

To better address their health and social needs, patients or residents who require support may be referred to relevant programmes or services offered by NHGP or the co-located agencies. In addition to NHGP programmes, Family Nexus has the advantage of forging collaborations with the co-located agencies and other supporting agencies, and connecting patients and residents to their services and programmes. Some of the key partners include Care Corner Singapore, Families for Life (FFL) and Sport Singapore (SportSG).

The collaboration between Family Nexus and Care Corner Singapore, a social service agency, enables patients and residents to access appropriate programmes and resources to strengthen family bonds, equip parents with valuable skills, nurture the emotional well-being of children and provide a supportive network for families. The collaboration with FFL will enrich families' lives with programmes such as purposeful play, parenting support groups and parenting/marriage workshops. SportSG will also have programmes targeted at young children.



### **Wheelchair-Friendly Weighing Machine**

Sembawang Polyclinic is the first in NHGP to introduce a wheelchair-friendly weighing machine. This machine brings greater convenience and comfort to patients with mobility needs as they can remain in their wheelchair while having weight measurements taken. Patients may use the weighing machine either with assistance from their caregivers, clinic staff or independently.