

21 March 2013

### **Press Release**

#### **National Healthcare Group Polyclinics (NHGP) Culture Transformation Programme: Rewiring the heart-ware**

There is a long line of patients waiting, but instead of seeing them as just another face in the queue or feeling flustered and irritated, our Health Attendant, Ms Jenny Tan from NHGP understands that every individual has their unique needs and challenges, and tries her best to understand and help each one.

This is the result of the NHGP's Culture Transformation Program (NHGP's Culture DNA), to help rewire the heart-ware of staff to reframe their perspective of creating value for patients and helping them.

"On a typical working day, I face many patients with different needs and expectations. Some of them are demanding and there are moments when patients vent their anger over the waiting time on me. It was unbearable and discouraging initially. But now, I can empathise with the patients and see them as people with needs, not just passing queue numbers." says Jenny.

#### **Culture Transformation since 2011**

As a public service provider that is often faced with demands and rising expectations, it is not easy to constantly meet these challenges by physical improvements alone. In 2011, NHGP's management team realised that to rise to the next level of performance, it was necessary to fundamentally revisit the way of working and thinking within the organisation. It was then that NHGP launched its own Culture Transformation Programme which is a system of thinking that puts others first, focuses on relationship, and emphasises on the right outcomes and results. This set of thinking permeates beyond just the way patients are served, but also into areas of process and physical improvements, as well as relationship between staff members.

#### **Leadership Takes Direct Ownership**

#### ***As Teachers and Facilitators***

NHGP's senior management team takes an active lead in this initiative to personally train and facilitate these Culture workshops for staff. To date, a significant proportion of the organisation's staff have been trained<sup>1</sup>.



[Mr Leong Yew Meng, CEO, NHGP personally facilitating at a workshop]

Mr Leong Yew Meng, CEO, NHGP adds, "The difference starts from us, inwardly. To see everyone we meet (be it a patient or co-worker) as an individual with different needs and challenges, and to pause a moment so as to understand their behaviour instead of being judgemental. This helps us to take ownership and rise above our challenges to help them."

### ***As Role Models and Service Leaders***

Apart from their role as coaches, management staff also embarked on monthly walkabouts in the different clinics to look at issues ranging from service to safety and improving operational kinks.

Management also actively participates in clinic activities to reach out to patients and staff. An example is the caroling sessions across nine polyclinics in December 2012, led by management members, to spread cheer to patients and staff.

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<sup>1</sup> Includes NHGP Way-of-Being workshop and iCARE service leadership workshop. Since the start of workshops in Dec 2011, 486 staff attended Way-of-Being and 450 attended iCARE. Numbers include NHG Pharmacy and NHG Diagnostics colleagues at NHGP's clinics.



*[Senior Management and HQ staff caroling at clinics in December 2012]*

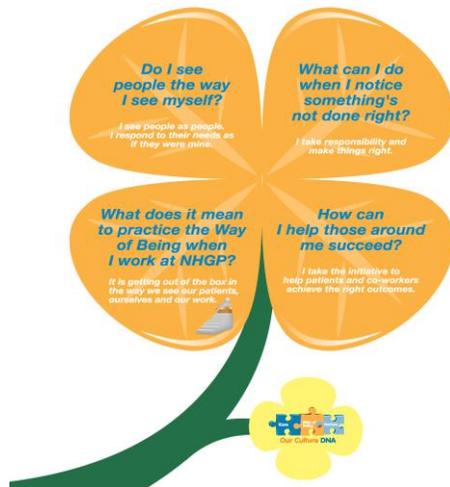
### ***Constant reminder and energisers***

Mr Leong and his team also go round the nine clinics yearly to conduct lunchtime talks for staff, to share the plans for the year and share insights and stories to inspire staff. These serve to constantly energise staff on how to make the difference to every individual patient.



*[CEO connecting with staff at lunchtime talks]*

NHGP also regularly reinforces its culture messages through collaterals that staff can carry with them as reminders and newsletters which messages on culture as well as positive stories with staff. Staffs are also constantly reminded through different touchpoints.



*[Message stickers placed on staff lockers and pantry areas]*



*[Fruits with stickers of NHGP's Culture logo and distributed to staff]*

### **Resonating with Staff Values**

The NHGP Culture Transformation programme has resonated well with the staff's internal values, and helped them realise their desire to contribute effectively and help patients. It also provides them with skills and techniques to deal with challenging situations.

One such example is where our staff is able to manage a difficult patient with calmness.

### **Process Improvement as part of NHGP Culture**

As part of its Culture, NHGP continuously improves its processes so that it is able to provide faster, better, safer and more cost-effective care for patients.

Some examples in the past year include:

- Redesigning workflow to reduce steps for patients who are seeking care after a fall. Their X-rays, and therefore diagnoses are expedited and care rendered timelier.
- Redesigning workflow to open up more appointment slots at laboratories to improve access and waiting time.
- New services such as the Wound Management Clinic (managing complex wounds at Primary Care level) and the Health and Mind Clinic (common mental disorders such as anxiety, depression and insomnia) were introduced at Primary

Care level, so that patients no longer need to be referred to the Hospital Specialist Outpatient Centres.

### **Facilities Improvement as part of NHGP Culture**

- NHGP has in recent years been upgrading its clinics to be more elderly and disabled-friendly, spacious and comfortable. Clinics were redesigned to have wider corridors, grab bars along walkways, brighter lighting and designated wheelchair parking at waiting areas.
- Special focus was placed on making it easier for patients to navigate their way around the clinic. Ang Mo Kio Polyclinic and Yishun Polyclinic were re-modelled to bring services closer to the chronic care patients.

### **Going forward- A continuous journey**

NHGP understands that this is a long and continuous journey. What is heartening is the constant support and encouragement from staff and patients. Already, it is seeing some good feedback from its efforts in the improved CSISG scores and the 2012 MOH Patient Satisfaction survey.

CSISG 2012 scores –

[http://ises.smu.edu.sg/sites/default/files/ises/csisg2012\\_executivesummary.pdf](http://ises.smu.edu.sg/sites/default/files/ises/csisg2012_executivesummary.pdf)

MOH Patient Satisfaction survey 2012 report –

[https://www.moh.gov.sg/content/moh\\_web/home/pressRoom/pressRoomItemRelease/2012/patient\\_satisfactionsurvey2012.html](https://www.moh.gov.sg/content/moh_web/home/pressRoom/pressRoomItemRelease/2012/patient_satisfactionsurvey2012.html)

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### **About National Healthcare Group Polyclinics (NHGP):**

National Healthcare Group Polyclinics (NHGP) forms the primary healthcare arm of the



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National Healthcare Group (NHG). Its nine polyclinics serve a significant proportion of the population in the central, northern and western parts of Singapore.

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.

NHGP provides a comprehensive range of health services for the family, including treatment for acute medical conditions, management of chronic diseases, women & child health services and dental care. Its clinics are one-stop health centres fully equipped with support facilities such X-ray services, mammography, ultra sonograms and pharmacies which carry a wide range of drugs and health-related items.

NHGP has been awarded the prestigious Joint Commission International (JCI) accreditation under the Primary Care Standards. It is also the main primary care training site for the NHG Family Medicine Residency Program which is accredited by ACGME-I (Advanced Specialty Accreditation Graduate Medical Education-International).