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For Immediate Release

MEDIA RELEASE

Heralding a New Direction in Family Medicine Training

National Healthcare Group Polyclinics launches Family Medicine Academy at Bukit Batok Polyclinic

4 September 2013 – The National Healthcare Group Polyclinics (NHGP) is injecting a boost into primary care with the launch of the Family Medicine Academy today. The Academy will train medical undergraduates and doctors in Family Medicine to better meet the healthcare needs of Singapore’s fast aging and growing population.

The Academy is jointly set up by National Healthcare Group, NHGP, and the new Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine (LKCMedicine), with support from the Ministry of Health. “With our rapidly aging population, primary care will play an increasingly crucial role in the years to come,” noted Mrs Tan Ching Yee, Permanent Secretary (Health), who was guest-of-honour at the Academy’s official opening at the Bukit Batok Polyclinic. “The opening of the Family Medicine Academy today signals the importance of grooming new generations of well-trained and caring primary care doctors,” she said.

The purpose-built Family Medicine Academy comprises:

- a) A Clinical Skills Laboratory – which will enable students to gain practical skills in primary care procedures, and
- b) Specially designed Consultation Rooms – where students will get to observe lecturers, learn and practice their clinical examination skills on site – at the pulse of primary care.

Adjunct Associate Professor Chong Phui-Nah, Senior Director, Family Medicine Development and Education Director at NHGP, who is also an Adjunct Associate Professor (Family Medicine) at LKCMedicine added, “The Family Medicine Academy heralds a new direction in the training of medical undergraduates – one in which primary care is given more attention and focus within the student’s curriculum. We hope the early exposure to primary care will leave a deep imprint on the students and encourage more to seriously consider making Family Medicine a career as they contribute to Singapore’s healthcare system.”

The Academy will play an integral role in the delivery of primary care training as part of an innovative curriculum mapped by LKCMedicine, and NHG as its principal clinical training partner with NHGP lending its primary care expertise. A key feature of the curriculum is that subjects will no longer be divided into pre-clinical and clinical years – a practice which usually meant clinical exposure only at a later stage of the medical course.

The inaugural cohort of 54 LKCMedicine students will spend one week in their first semester of Year One at the polyclinics, with the Family Medicine Academy as their base of training within the community. Students will gain hands on learning in the areas of clinical skills procedures and skills in patient communication and examination. They will also be taught by primary care physicians from NHGP. Undergraduate medical students from other universities will also be able to use the facility. Added, Professor Lionel Lee, Executive Vice-Dean, LKCMedicine, “By teaching here at Bukit Batok and the other polyclinics, we are bringing our students closer to patients, their circumstances and environment. Students will experience medical care that is personal, continuing and comprehensive for all patients, regardless of age, gender, culture and background.”

Affirming the need for a new approach to teaching, Professor Chee Yam Cheng, Group Chief Executive Officer, NHG, said, “In order to nurture doctors and healthcare professionals who stay relevant, we must relook how we teach. This is a challenge that

LKCMedicine together with NHG, its principal clinical training partner, have addressed in their collaboration for the new curriculum. Since 2011, more than 30 of NHG's clinician educators have been deeply involved in shaping the curriculum for LKCMedicine with the faculty from Nanyang Technological University and Imperial College London.”

In addition to providing medical skills training, the Academy also aims to promote Family Medicine research, which will further strengthen primary care in Singapore.

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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 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).

For more information, please visit www.nhgp.com.sg.

About the 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 hospital, national specialty centres, and business divisions. Together they bring a rich legacy of medical expertise to our philosophy of patient-centric care.

By designing accessible and seamless healthcare services around patient needs, NHG ensures that patient care is fully coordinated within the cluster and is also extended to high level collaboration with other healthcare providers at home and abroad.



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NHG's vision of "Adding years of healthy life" is more than just about healing the sick. It encompasses the more difficult but 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. More information is available at: <http://www.nhg.com.sg>