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Advancing primary healthcare through service excellence

Bukit Batok, Clementi and Woodlands Polyclinics emerged top three amongst Singapore’s 17 polyclinics surveyed during the MOH Patient Satisfaction Survey (PSS) 2015. Patient satisfaction for all of NHGP’s nine polyclinics improved in their satisfaction scores, achieving a 92 percent in its overall satisfaction score — a significant 11 percent improvement from the previous year. In particular, Ang Mo Kio, Bukit Batok, Hougang, Jurong and Woodlands Polyclinics leaped by more than 10 percentage points.

Conducted by the Ministry of Health on an annual basis, the PSS 2015 was carried out from November 2015 to February 2016 by an independent survey company to assess patient satisfaction and help identify areas for improvement in public healthcare institutions.

According to the PSS 2015, 86 percent of the 12,469 patients surveyed found services and care at public hospitals, specialist centres and polyclinics in Singapore to be good or excellent. Compared to the results in 2014, this was a 7 percentage points increase from 79 percent achieved last year.

Ms Tracy Gan, Deputy Director of Service Leadership and Patient Relations Department, Operations Division said, “NHGP has been working closely with our patients and stakeholders by way of regular feedback and dialogue sessions to improve population health and transform the care experience to be hassle-free and centred around the needs of patients and families.”

Crafting the seamless patient experience: The Self-Help Appointment System

NHGP serves about 11,000 patients daily across its nine polyclinics. Automation and self-help platforms have helped to prepare in coping with the rising demand for polyclinic services due to an increasing and ageing population. To enable a more efficient patient flow and to reduce unnecessary waiting time at the polyclinics, NHGP introduced an online self-help appointment system on mobile application ‘miHealthCare’ and NHGP’s corporate website in May 2015. Patients are able to book same-day appointments to seek treatment for acute conditions like cough and cold. They also have the option to reschedule existing appointments for care services as well as view and monitor other appointments like laboratory and doctor consultations. These self-help options allow patients to manage their time better as they only need to come to the polyclinics at their consultation time.

Patients who accessed our services by appointment in 2015 have indicated a 15 percent improvement in satisfaction regarding their consultation waiting times.

Patients and their caregivers have commended NHGP on the efficiency and effectiveness of the self-help appointment system. Ms Ho Pei Qi, the daughter of a patient from Bukit Batok Polyclinic, shared how convenient it was for her to make an appointment for her mother online.
Driving productivity and convenience: The Self-Payment Kiosk

With the implementation of self-payment kiosks at all nine polyclinics in 2013, patients do not need to queue up at the payment counters but instead can choose to make payment using their NETS and ezlink cards at these kiosks. This was well-received by both patients and staff as it saved both time and man-hours at the payment counters. Following its initial success, the self-payment kiosk was further developed to an improved version that featured a new generation of self-payment kiosk with 10 payment modes available including the option to pay using cash or credit cards. It also has an in-built intuitive design that is more user-friendly and comes with multi-language options. It also features a one-stop seamless payment for all services consumed including outstanding bills.

In October 2015, two new units of the new generation kiosks were deployed to Jurong Polyclinic and plans are underway to roll out the improved versions to the rest of the polyclinics under NHGP. These new generation kiosks have helped to ease the load at the payment counters. Patients’ payment transaction time was shortened to around one minute, contributing as a significant factor in improved patient experience.

In working towards a more elderly friendly environment, NHGP also introduced sitting queues for payment as well as trained and designated staff as Service Ambassadors (SA) to provide assistance to patients.

Service Ambassadors for a quality experience

NHGP continuously invests in our staff through various training programmes to develop and energise them, and in turn, enable them to provide quality and service excellence to patients. This is also reinforced by management’s regular engagement with staff, to encourage and work with them to continuously improve our processes to serve patients better.

As part of service redesign and job enlargement of staff roles, NHGP implemented a new SA concept in January 2016. Identified service staff were groomed to create a patient-centric experience by proactively offering timely and appropriate assistance and support to patients and their caregivers at our polyclinics. The pioneer batch of SA hailed from Choa Chu Kang, Toa Payoh, Woodlands and Yishun Polyclinics. This shifted their roles from being predominantly “behind the counter” to “beyond the counter”, facilitating the change in the nature of interaction and the way they offer personalised assistance to patients.

Continued journey in transforming primary healthcare

All these advances and developments have, without a doubt, been aiding NHGP in its preparation to cope with the increasing demand for polyclinic services. The automated self-help platforms, complemented with a strong team of dedicated healthcare workers, have been proven to drive productivity and improve efficiency at the polyclinics. As NHGP continues in its mission in transforming the primary healthcare ecosystem in Singapore, it will continue to engage its patients and caregivers and work closely together to ensure sustainable, quality improvements so as to provide accessible, affordable and seamless patient-centred primary healthcare for all.
Patient education on Colorectal Cancer Awareness

In commemoration of Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month, NHGP Health Promotion and Preventive Care Division and NHGP Dietetic Services conducted nutrition talks together with colorectal specialists from hospitals at Yishun and Jurong Polyclinics on 19 March and 26 March respectively. The talks focused on the prevalence of colorectal cancer in Singapore and the relationship between poor dietary habits and cancer.

NHGP had the privilege of hosting health experts Dr Sim Hsien Lin, a Consultant in General Surgery at Khoo Teck Puat Hospital and Dr Bernard Lim, a Consultant Colorectal Surgeon at Mount Elizabeth Novena Hospital, who helped participants understand what colorectal cancer is, its signs and symptoms, and available treatment options. They emphasised that regular health screenings are important for early detection and cure.

NHGP Dietitian, Ms Abbie Sim and Senior Dietitian, Ms Janie Chua shared the link between poor eating habits and cancer, and cited studies showing how poor eating habits increased the risk of certain cancers. The dietitians also shared tips on how one might lower the risk of cancer and what participants can do to eat and live healthily.

The session was attended by 52 participants — 30 at Yishun Polyclinic and 22 at Jurong Polyclinic. These outreach efforts have enabled NHGP to raise the awareness of colorectal cancer and help more people understand how lifestyle habits and screenings can have a positive impact on their health journey. As the saying goes, “Prevention is better than cure.”

Nutrition talk at TOUCH Diabetes Support Connect session

On 5 March, Senior Dietitian, Mr Won Tin Chiang gave an educational talk at the Toa Payoh TOUCH Diabetes Support (TDS) Connect session, encouraging attendees to monitor the carbohydrate and fat contents of food they consume. In his talk, titled “Watch the Carbo, but don’t forget the Fats”, Mr Won highlighted that while many people with diabetes were careful with eating carbohydrates, they might not check the fat content of their food. TDS Connect session is a series of talks conducted by various healthcare professionals for members and their caregivers. It is also one of the platforms where NHGP Dietetic Services has been able to extend their outreach efforts to the community.

Learning journey with patients to make healthy supermarket choices

On 23 Feb 2016, NHGP Dietitian, Ms Sharon Teoh and Senior Dietitian, Ms Agnes Wong, together with Mr Gabriel Wong, intern and student dietitian from Flinders University, South Australia, conducted a ‘live’ label reading session at FairPrice Supermarket in Marsiling. The supermarket tour was organised for patients with chronic diseases from Woodlands and Bukit Batok Polyclinics.

In this hour-long tour, the dietitians educated participants on choosing healthier food options by reading food labels and looking out for products with the healthier choice symbol. Participants also picked up practical tips on food preparation. 11 patients and one caregiver participated in this tour. Educational materials were given to participants for their future grocery shopping use. At the end of the tour, all the participants received a goody bag of healthy food products courtesy of FairPrice and NHGP.

Recognising Podiatry Day 2016 at the polyclinics

To celebrate Podiatry Day 2016, the NHGP Podiatry team channelled their efforts into raising awareness and highlighting the importance of diabetic foot care and podiatry amongst the general public. From 19 to 22 April, the team set up booths and put up posters on diabetic foot care at four polyclinics: Bukit Batok, Woodlands, Yishun and Hougang.

At the event, patients and caregivers were given a diabetic foot care brochure and had the opportunity to ask the podiatrists and podiatry assistants questions related to diabetic foot care. To make the sessions fun and interactive, the patients had the opportunity to walk away with foot care products if they correctly answered a simple question on diabetic foot care. Patients and caregivers who attended the event found the sessions to be engaging and informative and provided positive feedback.
Honouring women's health on International Women's Day 2016

To commemorate International Women’s Day on 8 March, NHGP held health promotion activities in the community to urge women to take care of their health. On 6 March, Choa Chu Kang (CCK) Polyclinic collaborated with the South West Mosque Cluster (SWMC) and People’s Association Malay Activity Executive Committee (MAEC) at CCK to hold celebrations for International Women’s Day at CCK Community Club. About 800 women of various ages participated in a sports challenge, an international healthy salad competition judged by Senior Dietitian, Ms Estonie Yuen, and even learnt to take better care of their health from NHGP and other public healthcare institutions.

CCK Polyclinic staff shared with participants on the importance of breast self-examinations and taught female attendees how to conduct regular examinations at home. Dr Jalia Binti Mohammed, Resident Physician from CCK Polyclinic, also gave a health education talk on women’s health conditions. Mr Gan Kim Yong, Minister for Health and Member of Parliament for CCK GRC, graced the event as the Guest-of-Honour and presented a token of appreciation to Dr Richard Hui, Head of CCK Polyclinic, for the clinic’s contributions to the community.

Participants enjoying themselves in the morning sports activity at Choa Chu Kang (CCK) Community Club where NHGP had a booth to promote women’s health.

In support of Nee Soon GRC International Women’s Day 2016 Dialogue on 12 March, Head of Yishun Polyclinic, Dr Kwan Pek Yee, Dietitian, Ms Chan Sau Ling and Principal Physiotherapist, Ms Cindy Soh held health talks for residents in the Nee Soon community on the importance of heart health amongst women as they age, and what women can do to lower the risk of getting heart disease.

Reaching out to Ang Mo Kio residents

To keep residents in the Ang Mo Kio community updated on the future plans of their polyclinic, NHGP Corporate Communications Department (CCD) and the Development and Planning Office (DPO) collaborated with Yio Chu Kang Community Club to organise two tailored engagement events in March and April.

On 3 April, Dr Koh gave a talk titled “Eating Your Way to Better Colonic Health: You are What You Eat” to residents from Grandeur 8, a condominium located close to the site of the re-developed Ang Mo Kio Polyclinic. This was followed by a presentation on the re-development works of Ang Mo Kio Polyclinic by its Clinic Head, Dr Christopher Chong. With construction works in full swing, it was a great opportunity to engage with residents and listen to their suggestions.

Keeping our facilities safe from dengue

In April and May, NHGP Operations Support Services Department and ISS Facility Services held educational talks on dengue prevention across nine polyclinics. NHGP, NHG Pharmacy and NHG Diagnostics staff attended the lunch time talks by Mr Kane Koh, an entomologist from ISS Pest Management, and learnt valuable information about the Aedes mosquito, tips to prevent mosquito breeding and ongoing measures undertaken by NHGP to ensure facilities are safe from dengue. Staff who attended the talk were more aware of their pivotal roles in protecting patients, fellow colleagues and themselves in the fight against dengue.
Celebrating Social Workers' Day 2016 with Champions Way residents

In celebration of Social Workers Day 2016, Medical Social Services (MSS) collaborated with Fei Yue Community Services to hold a community outreach event at Champions Way on 19 March. This event, targeted at residents living in the surrounding rental flats and studio apartments, aimed to raise awareness on how residents can access quality and affordable healthcare at the polyclinics, holistic support provided by MSS, and other available community services.

About 150 residents came to celebrate with NHGP. They were treated to free ice cream, sure-win lucky dips and a lucky draw. They also learnt how they could seek help if they faced various social issues at home. Children also enjoyed the craft activities that brought messages of hope, resilience and love. Social welfare agencies, namely the Ministry of Social and Family Development, Agency for Integrated Care, Fei Yue Family Service Centre, Spectra Secondary School and the Care Corner Cluster Support, came onboard to share information about the social support programmes available for different segments of the community.

Through this event, MSS fostered a stronger network with community partners and received positive feedback from residents, who found the information from the various booths useful.

Biannual support group event at Jurong Polyclinic - Plan While You Can and Holistic Care

As part of Jurong Polyclinic's biannual support group programme for patients with chronic diseases and their caregivers, support group members spent an afternoon on 27 February at Jurong Polyclinic learning more about Medical Social Services, Medisave, Medical Assistance and Subsidies schemes available at polyclinics from Resident Physician, Dr Cheah Ming Hann and Medical Social Worker, Ms Audrey Hii. Led by a team of chronic care nurses, this event proved to be an effective platform for members to interact with fellow patients who have similar chronic conditions and encourage one another to cope well in their daily lives. It also provided opportunities for them to learn and keep abreast of knowledge and skills to manage chronic conditions and improve their health.

One sensitive topic covered was the Advance Medical Directive (AMD). AMD is the legal document one signs in advance, informing the doctor not to use any life-sustaining treatment to prolong one's life in the event that one becomes terminally ill and unconscious, and where death is imminent. Dr Cheah introduced AMD with a short film that tells the story of a family's dilemma when making difficult medical care decisions for their young daughter. The lessons from the story set the stage for the participants to realise the importance of understanding AMD.

Ms Hii shared more on the role of Medical Social Workers, how they play a part in the holistic care offered at the polyclinics and how they help patients cope with social, psychological, financial and medical needs. She touched on the Medical Social Services available in the polyclinics which include care arrangement, supportive counseling, crisis intervention and financial assistance. She also explained the Medisave, Medical Assistance and Subsidy schemes available for eligible patients that help manage the costs of their medical bills.

Encouraging the community to make healthier dietary choices

NHGP Dietitian, Ms Abbie Sim was featured as a speaker at the Singapore Press Holdings' Chinese quarterly publication's HealthNo. 1 《健康No. 1》anniversary event at Suntec City Convention Centre on Saturday, 26 March. Comprising health seminars as well as a fitness and wellness fair for participants, the event was supported by UFM100.3 deejays and was publicised in newspapers and over the radio and internet. Speaking with 11 other health experts who touched on various topics, Ms Sim's talk in Seminar 1: Face to face with Cancer 《与癌症面对面》 focused on Diet and Cancer Risk. She shared on the relationship between one's diet and risk to cancer, emphasising the importance of a healthy diet as a form of preventive care. She shared how people can achieve a healthier diet, even if they dine out, by following the "Healthy Plate Concept" and suggested eating a "rainbow" of different coloured vegetables for a variety of nutrients. Thanks to the long-term partnership with our media stakeholders and effort put in by Dietetic Services, our dietitian has been able to reach out to a wider audience and encourage the community to make healthier dietary choices.
NHGP wins National Health IT Excellence Award 2015

For its contributions towards increasing Singaporeans’ access to care, NHGP’s Online Appointment System (OAS) was awarded the National Health IT Excellence Award 2015. NHGP received the award from Minister of Health, Mr Gan Kim Yong, at the 8th National Health IT Summit on 20 May. Assessed annually by MOH Holdings, this award recognises projects and initiatives that increase healthcare delivery capacity through effective demand management, productivity improvements or healthcare experience that is convenient and timely for patients.

With OAS, patients can view, book and reschedule their appointments via our web or mobile platforms, thus empowering them to better manage their time. Since introducing this service, patients’ wait time at the polyclinics has reduced significantly when they come by appointment.

NHGP Diagnostics receives re-accreditation for excellent quality and competence

NHG Diagnostics successfully received ISO15189 re-accreditation with zero findings in the surveillance audit. The ISO15189 is an international standard and requirement for quality and competence in particular for medical laboratories. Obtaining a successful recertification affirms the quality, reliability and accuracy of NHG Diagnostics’ laboratory processes and results. This achievement was made possible by the excellent team of medical technologists and technicians, who perform a wide range of services ranging from phlebotomy, spirometry, electrocardiogram, community health screening to laboratory services. In addition to day-to-day tasks, NHG Diagnostics’ medical technologists and technicians also actively initiate and execute continuous quality improvement ideas within the laboratories to smoothen workflows, increase efficiency and facilitate better patient care.

NHGP Clinic Operations awarded the Certified On-the-Job Training Centre by ITE

NHGP Clinic Operations is proud to be recognised as a Certified On-the-Job Training Centre (COJTC) by Institute of Technical Education (ITE). This affirms our efforts to institutionalise a structured in-house On-the-Job Training (OJT) system to train and develop our operations staff through quality workforce training practices. Comprehensive OJT programmes are planned for our Patient Service Associates (PSA) and Health Attendants (HA) to help our staff perform core duties competently and with confidence. The OJT programme also helps ensure a consistent quality of training and adherence to standards across all nine polyclinics, as well as keep our staff training on track. Moving forward, Clinic Operations plans to develop OJT programme to comprehensively cover all day-to-day administrative tasks at the polyclinics and encapsulate the full training needs of operations staff through regular feedback to meet the challenges of increasing work complexity and duties.

Serving with a heart

Dr Chua Ying Xian, a Resident Physician in Jurong Polyclinic, and Mr Mah Choon Siong, Senior Pharmacist, NHG Pharmacy, received the Healthcare Humanity Award 2016 from Courage Fund Patron Dr Tony Tan, President of the Republic of Singapore, on 6 May. The award recognised Dr Chua for his work in driving Jurong Polyclinic’s digitisation journey towards a paper-free environment, and his significant volunteer work in the community. Mr Mah was recognised for always placing his patients’ best interests at heart, often going beyond the call of duty to ensure patients were compliant in taking their medication.

Shining bright in the public service

On 20 May, Ms Anna Liew, Principal Pharmacist at Toa Payoh Polyclinic, NHG Pharmacy, received the PS21 Star Service Award for her dedication and excellent service to patients. Ms Liew received her award from Mr Peter Ong, Head of Civil Service, at the Excellence in Public Service Awards 2016 Ceremony, held at Gardens by the Bay, Flower Field Hall. Throughout her 13 years of service, Ms Liew has always put her patients first, ensuring that their needs and concerns are taken care of and attended to promptly.
Take the Lead. Break Away from Traditional Models of Care. Join NHGP, a Family Dedicated to Keeping the Community Healthy.

Family Physicians

As a Family Physician with NHGP, you will lead and work together with a team of healthcare professionals at the new polyclinic in Pioneer to provide better coordinated care for patients with acute, chronic and non-morbid conditions. You will also have the opportunity to provide training and guidance to junior doctors, nurses, Allied Health Professionals and other members of the healthcare team.

If you share the same passion as us in being one of the forerunners of advancing family medicine and transforming healthcare and have a heart for the community, we want to hear from you.

Job Requirements

- Basic medical degree with Master of Medicine (MMed) or Graduate Diploma in Family Medicine (GDFM)
- Accredited with the Family Physicians Register
- Good clinical skills and management
- Good interpersonal skills and rapport with patients
- Willingness to continually update professional knowledge and skills
- Flair for teaching and imparting knowledge to junior doctors and other members of the healthcare team

Our new polyclinic in Pioneer is NHGP’s latest primary care facility and is part of the Ministry of Health’s Healthcare 2020 Masterplan to expand the national healthcare capacity to meet the needs of Singapore's growing and rapidly ageing population by delivering more accessible, affordable, integrated and quality care to all. By 2017, this new development will offer residents in Jurong West convenient access to quality primary care services.

At this new polyclinic, the care delivery model will focus on patient empanelment to a care team, comprising Family Physicians, Care Managers, Care Coordinators and Allied Healthcare Professionals, working closely together to support patients’ care needs. The enhanced care team model will help the team better understand patients’ medical history and family environment to better engage them and manage their care plans holistically.

To apply or to find out more about these positions, log on to www.nhgp.com.sg/joinus.aspx

We regret that only shortlisted candidates will be notified.