Cross-institutional partnership brings greater health awareness to Sembawang residents
Some 280 residents benefited from various health screenings and education talks jointly set up by NHGP, NHG Diagnostics, Khoo Teck Puat Hospital and Agency for Integrated Care.
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Educating children on hand hygiene
As vulnerable young children are often associated with outbreaks in hand, foot and mouth disease (HFMD), NHGP infection control team visited Carpe Diem Kindergarten and Childcare Centre to educate some 100 children about hand hygiene.
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MOH’s key policy shifts to make outpatient services more affordable
Health Minister Gan Kim Yong shared details on key policy shifts that will give Singaporeans greater assurance over healthcare costs.
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Heralding a new direction in Family Medicine training

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

The Family Medicine 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 ageing 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 added.

The Family Medicine Academy will feature a clinical skills laboratory, which will enable students to gain practical skills in primary care procedures. It also has specially designed consultation rooms, where students will get to observe lecturers as well as learn and practise their clinical examination skills on site.

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. Professor Lionel Lee, Executive Vice-Dean of LKCMedicine, added, “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 to 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 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.
Cross-institutional partnership brings greater health awareness to Sembawang residents

National Healthcare Group Polyclinics collaborated with National Healthcare Group Diagnostics (NHGD), Khoo Teck Puat Hospital (KTPH), and the Agency for Integrated Care (AIC) to set up a healthcare booth at the Sembawang GRC Healthy Lifestyle and Celebrate Wellness Roadshow on 18 August 2013. Some 280 residents benefited from the health screening and counselling, mammogram, and bone mineral densitometry (BMD) screening.

Manned by 148 staff from NHGP (Yishun and Woodlands Polyclinics, Dental division, and Patient Empowerment and Community Engagement department), NHGD, KTPH and AIC, the booth also offered other services like vision test and oral health instruction. They also helped residents sign up for the Community Health Assist Scheme (CHAS) and educated them on how to use the CHAS cards at CHAS-certified general practitioner clinics.

The roadshow, organised by Sembawang Group Representation Constituency (GRC) Women’s Steering Committee, was held from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. at the open field next to the Causeway Point Shopping Centre. Mr Khaw Boon Wan, Minister for National Development and Member of Parliament for Sembawang GRC, and Ms Grace Fu, Minister, Prime Minister’s Office, Second Minister for the Environment and Water Resources, and Second Minister for Foreign Affairs, were present as the guest of honour and special guest, respectively. They were pleased to witness the cross-institutional partnership that brought greater health awareness to the community.
Hand hygiene outreach to Carpe Diem Kindergarten and Childcare Centre

Every year, the NHGP infection control team organises outreach programmes to educate public on the importance of hand hygiene in relation to personal health. As vulnerable young children are often associated with frequent outbreaks in hand, foot and mouth disease (HFMD), on 10 July 2013, the team visited Carpe Diem Kindergarten and Childcare Centre to educate some 100 children about hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette, and keeping themselves safe from germs in the environment.

Fun-filled activities were carried out. These included animated storytelling, hand washing jingles and sing-along, hand washing demonstration, activity sheets on infection control, and prize giving for quizzes and participation. The children had a meaningful day that was filled with laughter, interactions and learning with the team. It was a rewarding day for all in the team, as well as the kindergarten teachers and children in both centres.

Clementi Polyclinic participates in Baby Show at Clementi CC

Doctors and nurses from Clementi Polyclinic were invited to participate and help judge the Baby Show organised by the Clementi Community Centre (CC). This was held on 14 July 2013 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

About 70 babies participated in the Baby Show. They were grouped into three categories based on age bands. There was also a talk on child safety by National University Hospital. The event ended with a lunch with the guest of honour, Mr Arthur Fong. Clementi Polyclinic was presented with a plaque as a token of appreciation for supporting the event.
Inaugural Infection Control Seminar in NHGP

NHGP organised its first Infection Control Seminar titled “Moving towards Elimination of Healthcare Associated Infections (HAI)” on 26 July 2013 at TTSH Theatrette. The seminar increased the awareness among NHGP staff on the prevalence of HAIs and highlighted the importance of sustaining infection control measures to keep the environment safe for care delivery.

Dr Karen Ng, Chairperson of NHGP’s Prevention and Control of Infection Committee (PCIC), addressed the audience in her opening speech. The guest speaker, Dr Hsu Li Yang, Assistant Professor, Department of Medicine, Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine, delivered a talk on “Preventing HAIs caused by Multidrug-Resistant Organisms (MDRO).” Ms Ng Toon Mae, Infection Control Advisor, PCIC, spoke about integrating infection prevention into healthcare delivery in primary care setting. In addition, the winners of the infection control improvement projects and the hand hygiene awards received their prizes during the seminar.

The seminar was successful in bringing healthcare providers together for a worthy cause – pursuing infection control measures to prevent HAIs and recognising staff who are role models in hand hygiene.

Better experience in the clinics: “Missed Q” display and self-payment kiosks

NHGP strives to provide outstanding and compassionate care and service, each step of the way. Putting patients first requires more than world-class clinical care – it also requires care that addresses every aspect of a patient’s encounter with NHGP. Recently, NHGP has implemented two initiatives to improve the patients’ experience in its clinics.

“Missed Queue Number” display
It is harder for NHGP patients to miss their appointment after the “Missed Queue Number” display was implemented in the clinics on 6 June 2013. The missed queue numbers, strategically flashed up on the television screens at the registration areas of all nine clinics, will alert patients who did not respond when their numbers were called.

To better serve the needs of its patients, NHGP also piloted the display of missed queue numbers at the consultation waiting areas at Yishun, Ang Mo Kio, and Jurong Polyclinics between May 2013 and August 2013. The impact of the initiative will be further evaluated before it is rolled out to the rest of the six clinics under the group.

In addition to “missed queue number” display, staff will also shout out queue numbers when there is no response to the call.

Enhanced self-payment kiosks
From August 2013, NHGP patients can use the self-payment kiosks at all nine NHGP polyclinics to pay their medical bills as well as access a greater variety of payment options. The kiosks were launched in five polyclinics, namely Jurong, Hougang and Woodlands, Choa Chu Kang and Yishun, in February and March 2013. Later in August 2013, the kiosks were implemented in Ang Mo Kio, Toa Payoh, Clementi and Bukit Batok Polyclinics.

These kiosks were enhanced in July 2013 to allow patients to pay using their Medisave, or through third party payment and financial assistance schemes such as Medifund.

To improve patients’ experience at the polyclinics, a survey was conducted in March 2012 to find out patients’ preferences towards various payment modes. More than 90 percent of patients preferred to make payment at the clinics. While most preferred cash payment, over 80 percent of respondents surveyed said they would use a self-payment kiosk if available.

The kiosks currently accept payment using NETS, NETS Flashpay, NETS Cash Card and EZLink. The screen has elderly-friendly features such as big fonts and user-friendly graphics with minimal navigational clicks.
More affordable outpatient services

On 29 August 2013, Health Minister Gan Kim Yong shared details on key policy shifts that will give Singaporeans greater assurance over healthcare costs. The Minister’s announcement follows months of policy reviews and engagement sessions. The enhancements below will help make outpatient services more affordable in Singapore.


CHAS (Community Health Assist Scheme) qualifying age removed, qualifying income adjusted

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAS Type</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Before</th>
<th>After</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blue CHAS</td>
<td>Qualify Age</td>
<td>40 years and above</td>
<td>All ages will qualify</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Qualify Income</td>
<td>$900 or less per capita monthly household income, Annual Value of $13,000 or less for household with no income</td>
<td>$1,100 or less per capita monthly household income, Annual value of $13,000 or less for households with no income</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orange CHAS</td>
<td>Qualify Age</td>
<td>40 years and above</td>
<td>All ages will qualify</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Qualify Income</td>
<td>More than $900 but $1,500 or less per capita monthly household income</td>
<td>More than $1,000 but $1,800 or less per capita monthly household income, Annual Value of more than $13,000 but $21,000 or less for households with no income</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Better coverage for chronic diseases, via CHAS and Medisave use

Medisave use will be extended for the outpatient treatment of five more chronic conditions under the Chronic Disease Management Programme (CDMP), bringing the number of chronic conditions under CDMP to 15. The additional conditions covered are: osteoarthritis (degenerative joint diseases), Benign Prostatic Hyperplasia (enlargement of the prostate gland), Anxiety, Parkinson’s disease, and Nephritis/Nephrosis (chronic kidney disease). In line with this, treatment of these five new chronic conditions can also be subsidised under CHAS, at up to $480 per year. This will enable chronic patients to reduce their cash payment, and will also take effect from 1 Jan 2014.

Medisave extended for pneumococcal and influenza vaccinations and recommended neonatal screening

As part of an ongoing review, Medisave use will be extended for the following vaccinations and outpatient screening on 1 Jan 2014, subject to the prevailing withdrawal limit of $400 per Medisave account per year:

- Pneumococcal and influenza vaccinations for high-risk groups, such as the very young, elderly, persons with chronic medical conditions and those with poor immune function.
- Recommended neonatal screening tests for newborns.

More subsidies for recommended screenings, via CHAS

From 1 Jan 2014, CHAS cardholders will be able to enjoy subsidies for the recommended screening tests under the Integrated Screening Programme (ISP). They will also be able to enjoy subsidies for consultation with a GP for the screening, and to review the screening test results. The recommended screening tests under ISP are screening for obesity, diabetes, hypertension, lipid disorders, colorectal cancer and cervical cancer.

Lower charges at Specialist Outpatient Clinics (SOCs) in public hospitals

MOH will lower the charges at SOCs in public hospitals by enhancing subsidies for lower- and middle-income groups. Details will be announced in the first quarter of 2014.

To get to know more about CHAS: www.chas.sg

For general practitioners who wish to sign up for CHAS: https://pcps.gpcare.sg
Caregiver’s course: Care of the Elderly
Approved course by the Centre for Enabled Living, Singapore

With the busy schedules of Singaporeans, getting someone to help out at home is often a necessity. But if you have elderly parents or young children at home, would you entrust their care to a caregiver who may not be adequately trained? Or would you want to learn the skills on how to care for your family more effectively?

The Primary Care Academy offers a training programme conducted by experienced registered nurses to equip you and your caregiver with the basic skills in caring for the elderly. If you are a caregiver or employer of a caregiver, this training programme will enhance your ability and improve your caregiver’s skills in providing excellent care to your loved ones.

The course covers the following topics:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hygiene and grooming</th>
<th>Waste Handling</th>
<th>Safety</th>
<th>Feeding</th>
<th>Communication</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Cleaning of mouth and dentures</td>
<td>• Use of diapers</td>
<td>• Safe lifting, positioning and turning</td>
<td>• Preparation of feeds</td>
<td>• Caregiver self-care &amp; tips</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Bed bathing</td>
<td>• Use of urinals and bedpans</td>
<td>• Safe use of mobility aids</td>
<td>• Types of feeds</td>
<td>• How can I cope?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Assisted bath</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Falls precautions and prevention of accidents</td>
<td>• Feeding tips</td>
<td>• Where can I get help?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Dressing and grooming</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Safe administration of medication</td>
<td>• Tube feeding</td>
<td>• Basic communication skills</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Changing of bed linen</td>
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<td>• Prevention of pressure sores</td>
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<td>• Foot Care</td>
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</table>

Date
18 December 2013, Monday

Time
10.00 a.m. — 5.00 p.m.

Venue
PCA Learning Centre,
Choa Chu Kang Polyclinic Level 3,
2 Teck Whye Crescent,
Singapore 688846

Fees
$10.70 (with training grant)
$117.70 (without training grant)
*terms for application for training grant available at www.pca.sg

Contact
mei_yin_wong@pca.sg
michelle_kj_erice@pca.sg
Tel: 6496 6682 / 6496 6683

General Practitioner’s Assistant Course – Advance

The course covers:

> Overview of the use, common side effects, precautions and active ingredients of medication used to treat common medical conditions, e.g. Upper Respiratory Tract Infection, Pain, Infection, Hypertension and Diabetes Mellitus.

> Train to perform common clinic-based procedures, e.g. 12 Lead ECG, application of eye ointment, ear drops, nasal spray, nebuliser via facemask and space device.

Date
16 & 17 January 2014

Time
1.00 p.m. — 4.30 p.m.

Venue
PCA Learning Centre,
Choa Chu Kang Polyclinic Level 3,
2 Teck Whye Crescent,
Singapore 688846

Fees
$380 (exclusive of 7% GST)

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