Transform Care

National Healthcare Group Polyclinics

Working with community partners to improve care

In June 2014, National Healthcare Group Polyclinics (NHGP) signed a memorandum of understanding with Nee Soon South Constituency to better support residents’ care needs. NHGP also collaborated with various organisations to improve access to healthcare services, and gain a better understanding of community needs.

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Lipid-lowering workshop for patients
As part of NHGP’s efforts to empower its patients to make long-term lifestyle changes and achieve healthy blood cholesterol levels, a cholesterol-lowering workshop was held at Hougang Polyclinic.
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Talk on healthy eating for pre-schoolers
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NHGP recognised for excellent HR practices
NHGP was conferred three awards by the Singapore Human Resources Institute (SHRI) in honour of its quest in championing excellent human resource (HR) and people management practices.
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TWO NEW BUS STOPS TO SERVE NEW YISHUN POLYCLINIC
Two new bus stops, serviced by Bus No. 853, have been erected just outside Yishun Polyclinic! Thanks to various agencies, including grassroots advisors and leaders of Nee Soon East Constituency, Land Transport Authority, SMRT Corporation Limited, and Ministry of Health, for bringing greater convenience to the residents and polyclinic patients.
Working with community

With healthcare services provided in the community setting, seniors can be cared for in the comforts of the community they are familiar with. NHGP has been collaborating with various organisations to make healthcare services catering to the needs of the senior population more accessible to the community.

Better access to subsidised medications and lab services for nursing homes’ residents

On 14 April 2014, NHGP started a Chronic Care-At-Site Collaboration with St. Andrew’s Nursing Home (SANH), a psychiatric nursing home, NHG Diagnostics and NHG Pharmacy. As a result of the collaboration, residents in SANH with chronic conditions will not need to visit the polyclinics for their regular medical check-ups.

Through this collaboration, resident doctors from SANH can see residents whose chronic conditions are stable at the Home and fax their prescriptions to Hougang Polyclinic’s pharmacy. SANH will then send representatives to the polyclinic to collect the subsidised medications. Similarly, for residents who require laboratory tests such as blood tests, specimens are collected by SANH’s nurses and sent to NHG Diagnostics’ laboratory for processing. The test results will be sent to the Home for follow-up the next day.

This collaboration brings greater convenience to the Home’s residents while reducing the resources required in bringing the residents to the polyclinic. SANH’s residents will also have a regular team of physicians taking care of their chronic conditions. As of June 2014, about 150 patients have benefited from this collaboration. In time, more resident-patients are expected to benefit from this initiative. This collaboration follows the success of a similar pilot at Angsana Home in October 2013.

“We are motivated by a common vision and mission – to provide seamless, quality patient care for the vulnerable and under-privileged group of psychiatric patients who are burdened with chronic diseases. I am glad that this collaboration came about as the patients get to benefit from it.”

Dr Tiew Lay Hwa
Executive Director, St. Andrew’s Nursing Home

Health needs analysis survey for vulnerable residents

Fei Yue Community Services (FYCS) and a team of Malay nurses from Choa Chu Kang Polyclinic conducted a health needs analysis survey for residents at Block 9, Teck Whye Lane on 16 May 2014. The survey findings will be used by FYCS, NHGP and the Agency for Integrated Care to understand how they can better help the senior residents stay well in the community.
partners to improve care

The nurses interviewed 20 Malay residents, helping to bridge an initial language barrier between FYCS and the residents, thereby bringing the number of residents profiled up to 95 – approximately 80% of the population in Block 9.

The survey was conducted at Fei Yue Senior Activity Centre (FYSAC) located at the void deck of Block 9. FCYS volunteers assisted residents involved in the survey from their homes to the centre. One of the nurses even visited home-bound residents to assess their health profiles.

Patient focus group for elderly at Care Corner SAC
On 24 May 2014, NHGP organised a patient focus group at Care Corner Senior Activity Centre (SAC), Block 149, Lorong 1, Toa Payoh. The 18 participants were elderly patients of Toa Payoh Polyclinic who reside in the precinct managed by Care Corner.

Through the patient focus group, NHGP gained a better understanding of the complex factors hindering these patients from staying well in the community. Some of these factors include psychosocial, financial, and environmental barriers. Other topics discussed include how patients keep themselves healthy and changes to enhance patients’ experience in the polyclinics.

The patients’ voices will be taken into consideration during operational planning and services development. Following the session, two patients were referred to Toa Payoh Polyclinic’s financial counsellors to assist them with their financial worries.

Signing a memorandum of understanding to better support residents’ care needs
NHGP signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with Nee Soon South (NSS) Constituency at the NSS community health fair on 1 June 2014. The three-year collaboration will see NHGP working with the division’s existing wellness centre, which offers services such as health screening and exercise facilities, to promote healthy living.

Together with NHGP, the wellness centre will provide better support for residents in psychology, dietetics, clinical pharmacy, diagnostics and caregiving services. With residents’ consent, the polyclinics in the area will also share patient data with the grassroots organisations. This is so that residents with chronic conditions can receive follow-up visits, ensuring that their conditions are under control.

The MOU was signed by Dr Lew Yi Jen, Senior Director of Clinical Services, NHGP and Mr Jack Soh, Chairman of the Citizens’ Consultative Committee. Minister K. Shanmugam graced the occasion.

Mammography services were also offered by NHG Diagnostics to female residents aged 40 years and above.
Lipid-lowering workshop for patients at Hougang Polyclinic

A cholesterol-lowering workshop was held at Hougang Polyclinic on 8 March 2014. This was part of NHGP’s efforts to empower patients to make long-term lifestyle changes and achieve healthy blood cholesterol levels. The workshop was conducted in English by Dietitian Charmaine Toh.

During the interactive two-hour workshop, Ms Toh explained how to interpret laboratory results for cholesterol, LDL-C (low density lipoprotein cholesterol), HDL-C (high density lipoprotein cholesterol) and triglycerides, and their impacts on the heart. Participants also learnt how different types of fats affect their health, and the amount of saturated fat hidden in local delights. Ms Toh then suggested healthier food choices when eating out, and taught participants how to read food labels when shopping for groceries.

The workshop ended with a hands-on cooking lesson, where participants made oat meals using healthy ingredients. Goodie bags with healthy food items were also distributed to the participants.

Career talk sparks students’ interest in healthcare

On 30 May 2014, Clinic Head Dr Tung Yew Cheong and Senior Staff Nurse Amy Han from Toa Payoh Polyclinic spoke to 90 Primary Six students from East View Primary School at their “Healthcare Career Talk” event. Some highlights of the talk included a candid sharing by Dr Tung and Ms Han about their experience working in the healthcare industry. They shared about the challenges frequently faced, as well as the rewards of pursuing a career in healthcare – such as job satisfaction and career fulfilment. Dr Tung also explained that apart from doctors and nurses, a healthcare team includes allied health professionals, operational support teams and administrators. The talk was well received by the students.

Talk on healthy eating for pre-schoolers

In line with PCF (PAP Community Foundation) Jurong Spring Childcare Centre’s theme of healthy eating for the month of May, Janie Chua, Senior Dietitian, NHGP, was invited to give a talk to parents on raising healthy children on 10 May 2014. Ms Chua shared about the Healthy Diet Pyramid, and encouraged pre-schoolers to consume fruits, vegetables and whole grains. She also suggested breakfast ideas and snack options, and gave advice to parents on dealing with fussy eaters. Arts and crafts activities were then conducted for children, which tied in with the healthy eating tips they had learnt. Educational materials produced by the Health Promotion Board were also distributed to parents to learn more on healthy eating.

Food myths debunked during Vietnamese cold roll making session

To promote healthy eating among its elderly residents, the Active Ageing Committee in Teck Ghee Community Centre organised a Vietnamese cold roll making session on 28 June 2014. Wong Yuefen, Senior Dietitian of NHGP, conducted the session. The event started with a 30-minute talk, during which common food myths, such as whether starchy food is fattening and if butter is better than margarine, were addressed. Following the talk, residents learnt how to make Vietnamese cold roll using a simple, tasty and healthy recipe. Each participant received a copy of the recipe at the end of the session.
Patient experience – beyond philosophy

Latest findings from the Ministry of Health (MOH) Patient Satisfaction Survey showed that NHGP has maintained its satisfaction score of 81.7% despite increased patient expectations. For the third consecutive year, NHGP clinched the top three positions among the 18 polyclinics in Singapore. Here’s a look at the initiatives NHGP has put in place that have improved patient experience in its nine clinics.

**Better accessibility**

NHGP implemented an appointment system in late 2012 to help patients manage their wait time. Patients can call NHGP’s Contact Centre to get a same-day queue and come to the clinic closer to their appointment time. To make it more convenient for patients, NHGP launched a mobile application in 2013 to allow patients to get a same-day queue for consultations and nursing services such as wound dressing. Patients can also reschedule selected appointments like vaccinations, make enquiries, and refill their medication. Self-payment kiosks were implemented to improve wait time and payment queues in the clinic.

**Patient’s voice**

To ensure the organisation is capturing feedback from its diverse customer base, NHGP offers a range of options for patients and their families to be heard and responded to. Examples include personal interaction with staff, feedback form, focus groups, patient satisfaction surveys, telephone hotline and online form. In FY2013, NHGP conducted eight patient focus groups. Through these sessions, NHGP gathered patients’ feedback on selected topics and improved its services to be more patient-centred.

**Constant communication**

To help the public better understand the institution, NHGP communicates its initiatives to patients through the media, newsletters, clinic posters, focus groups and its website. There are also ongoing efforts to profile how primary healthcare providers play a role in helping patients achieve their health goals. Such communications are important in helping patients better understand the values provided by the institution.

**Improved physical environment of care**

Over the years, NHGP has been upgrading its nine polyclinics to improve patient flow and enhance visitor experience. For instance, Ang Mo Kio Polyclinic completed its major upgrading works in 2012. In addition to creating bigger waiting areas, service rooms at Level 1 and 2 were re-clustered to reduce unnecessary patient movement. Retail pharmacies at NHGP’s polyclinics were also renovated to be more elderly-friendly and educational. Laboratories were reconfigured to expand in-house capability so that the majority of tests can be done onsite, and patients can get their lab results on the same day.

**Culture change**

Improvement to the “heartware” is the key in NHGP’s culture transformation, which began in 2011. In the new “Culture DNA” framework, NHGP’s service quality and quality improvement are anchored by the “Way of Being” principles that encourage staff to “see people as people”. These principles guide staff behaviour in providing excellent care in a supportive environment where staff feel empowered and fulfilled. The change process started with management staff taking the lead and setting the example for others to follow. Sixteen facilitators, which include NHGP CEO Mr Leong Yew Meng, conduct the Way of Being workshops for NHGP staff.

**Workforce focus**

About 1,000 staff at NHGP attended at least one of the organisation’s core programmes on Way of Being, iCARE and OurCare. iCARE, which stands for Confidence, Attentiveness, Respect, and Empathy, is a service-training framework. OurCare empowers staff to improve processes in their respective work areas. There are also learning forums and workshops organised for development of healthcare professionals, such as minor surgical procedures competency and advanced wound management workshops. These training programmes help NHGP staff keep abreast of the latest developments in medicine.
As part of the Singapore Healthcare Improvement Network (SHINe), NHGP participated in an improvement project aimed at redesigning the healthcare-associated infections prevention workstream. The team will start by designing a reliable hand hygiene process and the pilot tests will be conducted in NHGP.

SHINe is an umbrella group of 24 healthcare institutions commissioned by the Ministry of Health in 2012. The network aims to accelerate the pace and scale of improvement of Singapore’s healthcare system, particularly in the areas of medication safety, surgical safety and prevention of healthcare-associated infections. The SHINe council has started a large scale initiative (LSI), where teams will learn quality improvement methodologies and be coached on testing, re-designing, implementing and spreading process changes. The target of the LSI is to reduce patient harm by 30% in three years, and create a shared living and learning structure that spans within and across all participating institutions, SHINe’s central office and the Institute for Healthcare Improvement.

Since November 2013, NHGP has participated in the National Healthcare Group (NHG) Care Transformation Project. Under this IT envisioning exercise, all NHG institutions gathered and reviewed requirements for a new generation of Electronic Health Records that is in line with the National Health IT Master Plan.

Twenty focus groups were formed to look into different domains such as clinical documentation and protocol design; results management; prescription, medication ordering and administration; clinical analytics and research; population health and disease prevention; social-environment and community support; and privacy, security and access control.

They participated in a series of workshops to review the current patient care journey and processes and document functional requirements for the future integrated system. The workshops culminated in a World Café event on 11 April 2014, which featured a presentation on how the integrated Electronic Health Records would complement the future of healthcare.

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NHG successfully maintained its OHSAS 18001 certification in the recent OHSAS (Occupational Health and Safety Advisory Services) surveillance audit. The appointed Certification Body TÜV SÜD PSB conducted the audit on 27 June 2014 at Ang Mo Kio and Clementi Polyclinic. The teams from the clinics, together with the support of the Operations Support Services (OSS) team in NHGP’s Headquarters, facilitated the auditors’ walkabout and survey process. There were no nonconformity findings throughout the audit.
Two NHGP nurses receive Nurses’ Merit Award

Nurses are often hailed for their caring personalities and their warm interpersonal relations with patients. However, not many people know about their contributions beyond the frontline. As nurses have a great deal of interaction with patients, they are well placed to understand their patients’ needs and difficulties. At NHGP, Senior Nurse Manager Lim Voon Hooi and Nurse Clinician Chan Kwai Peng are two such nurses who actively champion projects to improve patient care.

For their contributions in patient care, Voon Hooi and Kwai Peng received the Nurses’ Merit Award from Minister for Health Mr Gan Kim Yong on 6 August 2014 at Orchard Hotel Singapore. The award recognises their outstanding performance and dedication to the profession over the years.

Making progress her life’s work

As the Head Nurse of Yishun Polyclinic, Lim Voon Hooi has made numerous contributions to patient care. When Yishun Polyclinic was relocated in 2012, Voon Hooi took the opportunity to set up a wound care cluster within the clinic. Located close to Khoo Teck Puat hospital, Yishun Polyclinic often treats many wound care patients referred from the hospital. Beyond treating such cases, the wound care cluster also tends to acute cases of cuts and scuffs, and more complicated conditions such as diabetic foot ulcers. The setting up of the wound care cluster has helped ensure a more seamless journey for patients.

In 2008 to 2009, Voon Hooi was also actively involved in developing the electronic nursing records for NHGP. It has enabled greater standardisation and sharing of nurses’ notes across the polyclinics, resulting in better patient care. Voon Hooi also recently developed a nursing documentation audit tool to assess and improve the standards of nursing in NHGP.

It makes a difference

When Nurse Clinician Chan Kwai Peng was 12, she saw first-hand the care and empathy that nurses showed to her late grandmother during the latter’s illness. It left her with a strong desire to do likewise, and 43 years on, she has not looked back. Kwai Peng has been instrumental in implementing a care initiative that not only empowers patients with stable diabetes mellitus, hypertension and hyperlipidaemia to measure and monitor their own readings at home, saving them a face-to-face visit with the doctors, but also empowers nurses in managing these patients.

Kwai Peng has also been involved in a Hypoglycaemia Prevention Project. The project ensures the seamlessness of care for NHGP patients who were discharged from a hospital or emergency department due to hypoglycaemia. She also introduced the use of drug images to assess patients’ knowledge, administration and adherence to their medication during medication reviews.

“A nurse’s duty goes beyond a workplace. With every patient who recovers or gets relief under my care, I know that although it makes a small difference in the world, it has made a big impact on each of them.”

Chan Kwai Peng
Nurse Clinician, Clementi Polyclinic

“One of the most memorable highlights in my career was when I was able to participate in the planning and design of the new Yishun Polyclinic. It was a wonderful feeling to see new ideas materialise with the aim of creating a safer environment for a better patient experience.”

Lim Voon Hooi
Head Nurse, Yishun Polyclinic
NHGP recognised for excellent HR practices

NHGP was conferred awards in the Employee Relations and People Management; Quality Work-Life, Physical and Mental Well-Being; and Learning and Human Capital Development categories by the Singapore Human Resources Institute (SHRI). The awards were presented at the Singapore HR Awards Presentation Gala on 11 July 2014.

In 2013, NHGP’s Employee Climate Surveys showed that overall staff rating for the organisation increased from 67% in 2010 to 72%. NHGP has also made significant improvements in learning and development, working relationships, work organisation, and promoting the holistic well-being of its staff. Here’s a look at some of NHGP’s HR management practices.

**NHGP operates in a culture of care** toward patients and staff. Instead of overly focusing on key performance indicators, NHGP motivates staff holistically through a values framework – Culture DNA. It encourages staff to look past personal objectives and do what is right for the interest of others.

The organisation also recognises the importance of staff engagement by keeping staff informed about initiatives and listening to their views and concerns through yearly CEO townhalls and fortnightly HR Clinics held at each clinic.

A Workplace Health Promotion committee was established to promote a healthy lifestyle. Some health-promoting activities include Fruits’ Day, Active Day and World Mental Health Day celebration for staff. The committee also encourages staff to participate in nationwide health promotion activities, such as the 1 Million kg Challenge™ by the Health Promotion Board. Free annual health screening is also conducted, with intervention programmes offered to staff with health risk factors.

NHGP also shows support and appreciation to staff’s family members as it acknowledges that it is the unwavering support from family members that enables staff to give their best at work. In November 2013, NHGP conducted its inaugural Family Appreciation Day, attended by over 100 staff and their families.

In addition, NHGP ensures that staff are given opportunities to be trained in a more holistic and structured manner by implementing a Training and Development Framework. Staff are given opportunities to participate in courses and conferences. Staff with high potential will also undergo leadership programmes developed by NHG and the Ministry of Health.

A union-management relationship is also fostered to promote the interest of all staff in NHGP. Union-Management dialogues are held quarterly to exchange updates. The union’s input is also sought when making improvements to staff benefits and before meting out disciplinary action.
Grant Enhancement Training workshop for staff

On 10 April 2014, NHGP’s Clinical Research Unit and the Singapore Clinical Research Institute (SCRI) co-organised a Grant Enhancement Training workshop for NHGP’s medical, nursing and allied health staff. The aim was to build the organisation’s research capacity and capability and support staff in developing competitive research grant proposals.

The workshop was facilitated by 13 research experts from SCRI, including SCRI CEO Dr Teoh Yee Leong and SCRI Chief Scientific Officer Dr Edwin Chan, and attended by 30 NHGP staff. In addition to giving lectures and conducting discussions on the key elements of grant writing, the SCRI experts also reviewed 11 research proposals prepared by the participants. Participants provided positive feedback and many felt better equipped to write persuasive and high-impact research proposals after the workshop.

Developmental assessment workshop for doctors and nurses

A developmental assessment workshop is organised annually to provide all doctors and nurses in NHGP with the latest updates on developmental assessment of children. This year, Primary Care Academy invited Dr Jennifer Kiing, Senior Consultant, Child Development Unit of National University Hospital, to share her experience on developmental assessment. Dr Ian Munt, Consultant, and Wong Hui Yi, Senior Clinical Psychologist, both from the Institute of Mental Health, were also invited to share on behavioural and emotional problems in children and adolescents. The workshop was attended by about 170 NHGP doctors, nurses and family medicine residents.

Beyond 50’s: Seminar on retail pharmacy products

The National Healthcare Group Pharmacy (NHGPh) organised a seminar titled “Beyond 50’s: Live Well, Be Healthy, Feel Great” for its pharmacists, pharmacy technicians, and retail and administrative staff. The seminar improved staff’s knowledge in retail products suited for individuals above the age of 50.

The event took place at Yishun SAFRA on 12 April 2014 and was attended by more than 70 NHGPh staff. Highlights of the event include talks on understanding nutrition and staying fit and healthy while ageing. Activity booths were also set up for staff to learn more about the various products.
Visit by Korean Public Health School delegates

Fifteen delegates from Korean Public Health School visited Clementi Polyclinic on 27 June. They were welcomed by NHGP CEO Mr Leong Yew Meng and the polyclinic’s management team. Mr Leong presented an overview of Singapore Primary Healthcare and NHGP to the lecturers and students during the visit. After which, the delegates toured the clinic.

Dr Lee Eng Sing received the First NMRC Research Training Fellowship

Dr Lee Eng Sing, Family Physician, Consultant, Hougang Polyclinic, received a National Medical Research Council (NMRC) Research Training Fellowship to pursue a Master of Clinical Science in Family Medicine. The training fellowship is awarded to outstanding and talented clinicians, health science professionals (e.g., nurses, pharmacists) and biostatisticians for overseas research training or to pursue a graduate degree in research in local institutions. The programme covers teaching and learning, theoretical foundations, advanced patient centred medicine and research methods in Family Medicine.

Dr Elaine Tan Suan Leng conferred NHG Outstanding Citizenship Award

Dr Elaine Tan Suan Leng received NHG Outstanding Citizenship Award on 10 July 2014 for her immense contributions to NHG’s objectives. Currently the Director of Collaborative Care at NHGP, Dr Tan has been instrumental in developing team based care, a multidisciplinary care approach that combines skill sets from various healthcare professionals at NHGP for greater patient wellness. Since 2008, she has led the professional development of Advanced Practice Nurses, enhancing their roles and transforming the way care is delivered to chronic disease patients. She was a mentor to the first Advanced Practice Nurse who graduated in primary healthcare, and pioneered the Advanced Practice Nursing tracks in primary healthcare for chronic disease and women’s health.

Team building event for NHG Diagnostics’ staff

On 27 April 2014, NHG Diagnostics (NHGD) staff came together for a friendly dragon boat race. More than 140 NHGD staff, and their colleagues from NHG Group Corporate Communications and NHG Group Human Resource, participated in the event. The race event drove home the message that team spirit is more important than the strength of individual team members. Participants were treated to a lunch after the event and each race participant was presented a commemorative medal by NHGD Executive Director, Dr Tyrone Goh. A prize-giving ceremony was also conducted for the winners of the Best 6S (Quality Improvement) Competition 2014 where two Distinction Awards and three Outstanding Awards were awarded.
Kindness fills NHGP’s nine polyclinics in May

With the belief that everyone has the aptitude for kindness, NHGP initiated two kindness-themed activities in May 2014, encouraging staff and patients to display their appreciation unreservedly.

Celebrate May Day
On 2 May 2014, the May Day Service Delight was rolled out across NHGP’s nine polyclinics. Customised memo pads were distributed to patients, who were encouraged to write their words of heartfelt appreciation for staff. These notes were displayed in the clinics.

NHGP Kindness Week
In conjunction with Singapore Kindness day on 30 May 2014, NHGP launched its Kindness Week on 26 May 2014. A webpage was created and served as a platform for staff to recognise and thank their colleagues for showing them kindness. Within a week, the message board was overwhelmed with more than 100 “cheers and applause” for staff caught performing acts of kindness.

In celebration of Hand Hygiene Day, NHGP’s Prevention and Control of Infection Committee (PCIC) held a sharing session during lunch that was themed “Count on Me for Safe Hands”. This was conducted in NHGP’s Headquarters and aimed at promoting hand hygiene. During the talk, Dr Predeebha Kannan, Deputy Director of Clinical Services and co-chairman of PCIC, shared about the rise of multi-drug resistant organisms (MDRO). She also showed how hand washing or rubbing can prevent the spread of such germs.

The session ended with an interactive glitter ball game, where participants experienced how easily germs, symbolised by the small flecks of glitter, can be spread from hand to hand. Participants also received cue cards with instructions on hand washing or rubbing.

More information about how NHGP works together as a team to support its patients, especially those with complex chronic conditions, can be found at www.nhgp.com/Our_Care_Team/.

Wall decals to share NHGP’s culture of team care

At NHGP, every patient is cared for by a team of healthcare professionals. These professionals lend their different expertise in managing the patient’s needs, resulting in better health outcomes. To share the culture of team care with patients and familiarise them with their care teams, wall decals featuring members of the respective clinic’s care team have been put up at NHGP’s nine polyclinics.

Each team is led by a family physician and comprises nurses, pharmacists and allied health personnel. A registered nurse, known as a Care Manager, helps coordinate the patient’s care with other relevant allied health professionals that include pharmacists, podiatrists, and dietitians.

Hand hygiene: it’s every healthcare worker’s responsibility

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More information about how NHGP works together as a team to support its patients, especially those with complex chronic conditions, can be found at www.nhgp.com/Our_Care_Team/.

Encouraging patients to write notes of appreciation for staff

Wall decals featuring members of the care team

Top: Staff passing the glitter ball around

Bottom: Staff answering a question on hand hygiene during the interactive glitter ball game
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