

Welcome address by Prof Chee Yam Cheng, National Healthcare Group CEO, at the Official Opening of Choa Chu Kang Polyclinic at 11.15am on Tuesday, 20 September 2011

Transformation inspired by the People, Community and Environment

Minister Gan,

Mr Leong Yew Meng, CEO of National Healthcare Group Polyclinics,

Distinguished guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen.

NHGP overview

1. Thank you for coming to the official opening for Choa Chu Kang Polyclinic.
2. Choa Chu Kang polyclinic first opened its doors in 1997 and was one of the nine polyclinics that grouped under the National Healthcare Group when clustering took place in 2000. Over the past 11 years, NHG Polyclinics have been serving our population in the west, central, north and north-west of Singapore.
3. From Day 1, our focus has not changed in endeavouring to meet the needs of our population as best as we can within the heartlands, with the resources we have. We do this by providing quality medical care and forming a healing relationship with the people we serve and forging strong partnerships with the community and other providers.

Our Transformation

4. What has changed over the past 10 years is that we have been continually trying to reinvent ourselves to do better and to keep our population healthier. We have strived to provide a more comprehensive range of health services for the family, including treatment for acute and chronic medical conditions, dental care, nursing services, health screening, prevention and health promotion. The polyclinics are also equipped with modern laboratories with X-ray facilities, and pharmacies that do not just dispense medicine but also provide retail drugs and products to create greater convenience for our patients.

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5. We have also embarked on a journey to provide care that is of higher quality. I understand that three clinical practice improvement program (CPIP) projects are currently in progress by teams in Choa Chu Kang polyclinic that will bear fruit in the coming months. The projects are

- a) Improving the care of diabetic patients
- b) To achieve 100% referral rate of diabetic patients with eye problems
- c) Improving management of neonatal jaundice screening

6. We have not forgotten to renew ourselves physically as well. Since 2007 we have started a schedule of renewing our clinic buildings, and Choa Chu Kang Polyclinic came under this renewal and physical improvement programme. One of the greatest challenges for the team was to design a clinic that meets the spatial needs of the huge volume of patients we serve. To meet the increasing healthcare needs of an aging and growing population we managed to reduce waste in our work processes by applying the Lean Methodology of work improvement to our operations.

7. As part of the methodology, this value stream mapping was done by carefully studying the patient flow and taking suggestions from staff and patients. We applied Lean-Toyota thinking to plan human movement flow and minimise unnecessary shuttling between different parts of the clinic. This brought about more convenience to patients and greater efficiency for our staff. The needs of the elderly and handicapped have not been forgotten. An example is how our pharmacy has a dispensing counter that caters to patients on wheelchair and we have another laboratory on the 1st floor so that it is easily accessible to patients who have mobility difficulties.

8. The team also focused to provide an environment that promotes healing by maximising the availability of natural light, ventilation and greenery. The building is also designed to be environmentally friendly, and I am also pleased to share with you that in recognition of these efforts, BCA has awarded this polyclinic with the BCA Green Mark (Gold Plus) award that recognises best practices in environmental design and performance.

Changing role of Choa Chu Kang Polyclinic

9. Given that our population is aging rapidly and healthcare resources are limited, we cannot continue by doing more of the same. One important strategy we have put in

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place is of health promotion and prevention by taking a proactive approach in empowering our population to delay the onset of illness and enjoy better health and more productive lives. I understand that Choa Chu Kang Polyclinic will pilot a weight management programme this November to drive home the importance of taking care of one's health. Managed by a team of dietitians, health promotion consultants and physiotherapists, selected patients will undergo a 12-week course to learn how to manage their weight and achieve a healthy lifestyle.

10. When the residents do fall ill and become our patient, our strategy is then to treat them effectively, by the most appropriate staff, and keep them from being hospitalised as it helps them avoid incurring any unnecessary medical costs. To do all of these well, we need to continue to attract and educate a new generation of healthcare professionals who are well skilled and are aligned to our strategies.

11. Choa Chu Kang polyclinic is one of our training centres for postgraduate doctors specialising in Family Medicine. We already have some of the consultation rooms designed for education. We will also very soon put in place the Resident Continuity Clinic here, which is where these residents will see and manage their patients in consultation with senior doctors. We also have the Primary Care Academy, which provides different courses relevant for different professional groups working in primary healthcare, as well as caregivers and members of public.

12. With MOH's announcement on expanding the Primary Care Partnership Scheme, we also anticipate ourselves working more closely with private GPs such that patients will continue to have care that is affordable, coordinated and hassle-free, and of a high standard.

Conclusion

13. On taking stock, we are proud of what we have achieved and have to offer our residents. We are grateful to the support of MOH, our partners, our friends, patients and staff who have made these possible. We will continue to focus on being patient-centric to raise standards and deliver better health. In these, we look forward to your continued support.

Thank you.