

MEDIA RELEASE

HEALTHIER SG PRIMER FOR GENERAL PRACTICE WELCOMED BY GPs

The 'NHG Healthier SG Primer for General Practice' equips General Practitioners in the management of patients with chronic diseases

Singapore, 27 July 2023 –The Primary Care Academy, run by the National Healthcare Group Polyclinics (NHGP), has received positive feedback for its “NHG Healthier SG Primer for General Practice”, a set of learning resource and training materials developed specifically for the primary care sector to meet the objectives of Healthier SG (HSG). Launched in November 2022, the primer supports General Practitioners (GPs) in Central and North Singapore with skillsets to provide holistic, preventive and improved chronic care to patients, and better prepare them for the launch of HSG on 5 July 2023.

NHG Healthier SG Primer for General Practice

2 The primer has equipped the GPs with both clinical and practice management skills to deliver health and care planning components required by HSG. The curricula were delivered as blended learning, with self-directed online modules as well as in-person team-based workshops for both the GPs and their clinic assistants (CAs).

3 The training is intentionally team-based to replicate NHGP's Teamlet Care Model, which has been shown to improve care continuity, comprehensiveness and integration of care when patients are always attended to by the same care team. This is also in-line with the criteria of HSG whereby GPs will need to be part of one of the 11 Primary Care Networks in Singapore to participate in HSG. The Primary Care Network, a multi-disciplinary team of doctors, nurses and primary care coordinators, was first piloted in 2012 to decentralise care into the community for more effective management of chronic conditions. The NHG Central-North Primary Care Network (CN-PCN) was subsequently formed in April 2018 to provide nurse counselling, ancillary and administrative support services to GPs working closely with NHGP in the care of patients with chronic conditions.

Positive feedback on primer from GPs and CAs

4 Response to and feedback on the primer has been positive. As of 1 July 2023, close to 200 participants have signed up for the primer. Participants have cited the e-modules as detailed, informative and useful especially for topics on counselling, smoking cessation and exercise prescription. The team-based workshops have also received overwhelming response, with close to 100 participants attending the first three runs to discuss strategies for chronic care, smoking cessation, exercise prescription, dietary interventions, health screening and vaccinations.

5 Dr Irwin Chung, Director, Primary Care Academy said, “We are heartened that participants have found the e-learning modules and team-based skills workshops to be useful. In particular, we have received positive feedback on the workshops for having an enriching

content, providing valuable knowledge and insight on how HSG can be delivered. With the GPs and their CAs attending the same session, they were able to learn important skills together in a circuit of small group discussions. The majority of the participants who attended the workshops felt more confident in handling topics such as cholesterol management, smoking cessation and exercise prescription, which are among the key topics under HSG.”

6 Other feedback on the e-learning modules include the materials being mounted on a well-designed, easy to use and highly accessible web portal with an intuitive interface. Participants found the e-learning modules to be highly convenient as it allowed learning at their own pace, and important and relevant information could be downloaded for future reference. GPs were also appreciative of the training for CAs, which prepared them for an active role in patient-facing tasks, such as taking of blood pressure and administration of health screening questionnaires. CAs also felt more empowered to speak with their patients on their disease conditions and dole out appropriate advice following the training.

7 “I’m glad to have had the opportunity to be part of a larger network of GPs, where I get to interact and exchange ideas with peers and share our experiences. Through participation in the primer developed by the Primary Care Academy, I’m able to verify that my practice in chronic disease management is current and aligned with what the polyclinics are practising. I’m also appreciative of the training given to my clinic assistant who can now better support care delivery. The primer has definitely helped me to better prepare for Healthier SG, as well as in my day-to-day clinical sessions. I would strongly encourage other GPs to sign up for the primer, especially those who are new to Family Medicine or private practice,” said Dr Jimmy Chew, a Clinical Sub-Lead for CN-PCN.

NHG Central-North Primary Care Network

8 While the PCA developed the primer, the CN-PCN ensured that the GPs remain connected to the larger healthcare landscape comprising hospitals and community partners, and are supported in medical education and training. Currently more than 30% of the GP clinics in Central and North Singapore have joined CN-PCN.

9 The engagement with the GP clinics to recruit them to CN-PCN was largely driven by the CN-PCN admin team with guidance from the Directors of CN-PCN, Associate Professor Chong Phui-Nah, Chief Executive Officer, NHGP and Primary Care, and Professor Philip Choo, Group Chief Executive Officer, National Healthcare Group. CN-PCN conducted GP engagement sessions with the community teams to highlight the support that the cluster will provide to the GPs in HSG, and to assure the GPs of the commitment to partner them in the HSG journey. Following the launch of HSG on 5 July 2023, CN-PCN and its Primary Care Coordinators have started supporting HSG-participating GPs in social prescribing, Intermediate and Long-Term Care services referral and referral to NHG Initiatives.

Plans to enhance the primer and reach out to more GPs

10 Moving forward, the primer will evolve in tandem with the progress of HSG, for example in areas such as mental health, respiratory disease management, childhood vaccinations and the care of elderly patients.

11 To extend the training to more GPs, PCA collaborated with the College of Family Physicians Singapore, Agency for Integrated Care and partners from the other clusters to spread awareness of the course. The fourth run of the workshop is taking place in July and the fifth run is slated to start in September 2023.

12 The NHG HSG Primer for General Practice is open to all GPs in Singapore. For more information on the topics covered, training dates and registration for the workshops, please contact the course secretariat at secretariat@pca.sg.

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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 seven polyclinics serve a significant proportion of the population in the central and northern regions of Singapore.

NHGP provides a comprehensive range of health services for the family, functioning as a one-stop health service centre providing treatment for acute medical conditions, management of chronic diseases, women & children services and dental care. 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.

Through the Family Medicine Academy and the NHG Family Medicine Residency Programme, NHGP plays an integral role in the delivery of primary care training at medical undergraduate and post-graduate levels. With the Primary Care Academy, NHGP provides training to caregivers and other primary care counterparts in the community sector.

More information is available at www.nhgp.com.sg.