

MEDIA RELEASE

NHGP LAUNCHES NEW INITIATIVE TO MOVE HEALTHCARE UPSTREAM IN THE CHRONIC DISEASE CONTINUUM

Part of NHGP's overall efforts to empower patients and improve health outcomes

Singapore, 15 July 2019 – In a bid to advance its efforts to transform primary healthcare, the National Healthcare Group Polyclinics (NHGP) is moving health conversations with its patients upstream to educate, engage and empower them, to help prevent or delay the onset of chronic diseases.

2 This holistic strategy to improve and sustain good health outcomes has seen the launch of a new care process for NHGP patients, which promotes self-empowerment and self-management. Associate Professor Chong Phui-Nah, Chief Executive Officer of NHGP and Primary Care, shared, “NHGP is committed to being a leading health-promoting organisation, that catalyses the health-promoting ecosystem for patients and the community. The new process of care, together with our existing efforts, maximises such opportunities and is part of NHGP’s overall effort to enhance healthcare delivery and empower patients to have greater ownership of their own health.”

Integrating Health Promotion and Patient Activation into Primary Care

3 Dr Wee Wei Keong, Director, Health Promotion and Preventive Care Division explained the organisation’s rationale for continuing its journey towards a holistic spectrum of care, “NHGP’s role and strategy in health promotion is analogous to that of a ‘kelong’¹, where fish enter in shoals, and are ‘caught’. Similarly, we systematically detect health risks among the many patients who visit us. We then educate, empower and engage them for healthy lifestyle changes. The patient becomes activated as a result.”

4 “Through this process, health risks are made visible to both the patient/family and the care team, thus contextualising relevant health conversations between both parties. This is also further enabled by NHGP’s other health-promoting initiatives, including supportive environments, policies and promotional efforts to nudge our patients towards positive health behaviours,” added Dr Wee. *(Refer to Annex A for NHGP’s existing health promotion and preventive care efforts.)*

¹‘Kelong’ is a Malay term to describe a wooden structure built above the sea by driving wooden piles into the seabed and used for commercial fishing

Systematic Contextualised Conversations with Patients

5 Recognising that risk stratification is vital to identify the right level of care for specific groups of patients, NHGP launched the *Tiered-Risk Interventions for Managing Weight (TRIM)*, at Ang Mo Kio Polyclinic in June 2018, and thereafter at Woodlands Polyclinic in April 2019. *TRIM* enables NHGP's care team to activate patients by systematically identifying those with health risks, and then starting contextualised conversations with them as part of their care. These patients are then referred to NHGP's health promoters in the clinic for health coaching and connected to intervention programmes in NHGP and the community. As of 30 June 2019, almost 4,500 patients have been identified under *TRIM*, of which close to 40% have been engaged in weight management conversations. Of those engaged, more than 70% either took up the recommended intervention programmes or were coached on health matters.

Targeted Intervention Programmes for Patients

6 One such recommended intervention programme is *Lighter Life*, an interactive group programme designed for eligible NHGP patients with chronic conditions such as diabetes and hypertension to achieve weight loss in a healthy way. The programme equips them to confidently self-manage their conditions with strong peer and community support. Over eight sessions spanning six months, these patients are monitored and coached on exercise, eating and behaviour change lifestyle habits by a multi-disciplinary primary care team comprising an NHGP family physician, nurse, dietitian, physiotherapist, clinical psychologist, and health experts. The coaching is also followed up with tele-communication sessions. The programme was first implemented at Ang Mo Kio Polyclinic in October 2018, and has since been made available for patients at Woodlands and Toa Payoh Polyclinics.

7 In addition to *Lighter Life*, community programmes such as *FitterLife* are also offered to patients. NHGP recognises that these health conversations can be continued beyond its patients to the community, and it plays a key role in guiding and helping the community bring together the necessary resources for this community programme. For its efforts, NHGP was recognised at this year's Asian Hospital Management Awards 2019.

8 64-year old Madam Saudah Marwan, who has hypertension, hyperlipidaemia and pre-diabetes, was one such patient who has benefitted from *Lighter Life*. Since completing the programme, her Body Mass Index and blood pressure readings have improved without any increase in her medication. Sharing her weight management journey, Mdm Saudah said, "Despite being physically active, I still gained weight. My doctor then referred me to *Lighter Life*. Under the programme, I was able to change my habits and apply what I learnt on healthy eating and safe and sustainable exercises. I've also had the valuable opportunity to serve as a peer facilitator for upcoming *Lighter Life* sessions, and share my experiences with new participants."

9 NHGP's new health promotion initiative goes a long way towards co-creating healthcare models that are relevant and truly person-centred. As Dr Donna Tan, Assistant Director of

Clinical Services noted, many of NHGP's projects are team-based. "Successful collaborations must have a common sense of purpose from not only NHGP's physicians and healthcare providers, but also from patients, caregivers, non-healthcare partners and the community too. Only then can the benefits and outcomes be truly sustainable, through activating our patients and the community in the long-term."

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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 six polyclinics serve a significant proportion of the population in the central and northern parts of Singapore.

NHGP provides a comprehensive range of health services for the family, functioning as a one-stop health centre providing treatment for acute medical conditions, management of chronic diseases, women & child health 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 <http://www.nhgp.com.sg>

ANNEX A: HEALTH PROMOTION AND PREVENTIVE CARE EFFORTS AT NHGP

HEALTH-PROMOTING ENVIRONMENT



Educational Displays

The lift lobbies, staircases and stairwells of NHG Polyclinics are designed with health messages to encourage patients to use the stairs and increase their physical activity level.



Clinic and Online Resources

Public health messages are amplified on NHGP's clinic screens as well as online platforms such as YouTube and the corporate website. This extends the reach not only to NHGP patients, but to the general public.

PATIENT EDUCATION PROGRAMMES



Eat it? Count it!

Piloted at Ang Mo Kio Polyclinic in September 2018, "Eat it? Count it!" is a 2-hour interactive group session conducted by NHGP dietitians for patients with diabetes to learn how to count their carbohydrates to manage blood sugar levels. The programme is currently run once a month.



Preventing Diabetes Workshop

The Preventing Diabetes Workshop is a 2-session workshop held once every quarter, and is conducted by NHGP or NHG staff to help participants understand impaired fasting glucose / impaired glucose tolerance and its risks, to learn about the lifestyle changes required to prevent Diabetes Mellitus, understand key concepts on nutrition and exercise, and introduce other Community Involvement Programmes that can support lifestyle modifications.

EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES AND REFERENCES



Eat Well Roving Carts

The aim of the Eat Well Roving Carts is to educate patients on the benefits of a healthy diet. Through food cooking demonstrations, NHGP health promoters educate and empower its patients on healthy cooking methods and how to prepare healthier meals through the use of healthier ingredients.

Each month, a simple and healthy recipe will be featured and prepared at the Eat Well Roving Carts at Ang Mo Kio and Yishun Polyclinics. The recipe and relevant patient education materials are then provided to patients to reinforce the skills and health information shared, empowering them to start making changes on their own.



Supermarket Tours

Supermarket tours are conducted for NHGP patients and members of the public, to learn how to make healthier food choices when shopping at a supermarket. Participants also pick up tips on the nutritional values of commonly purchased food items.

SCREENING PROGRAMME



Cardiovascular Risk Screening (CRS) Programme

NHGP's CRS programme aims to opportunistically risk-profile existing NHGP patients, through early identification of individuals with major coronary risk factors, so that target interventions may be offered.

ANNEX B: CHINESE GLOSSARY

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Dr Donna Tan Mui Ling Assistant Director, Clinical Services Family Physician, Associate Consultant National Healthcare Group Polyclinics	陈美琳医生 助理外长，医疗事务处 家庭医生，助理顾问 国立健保集团综合诊疗所
Tiered-Risk Interventions for Managing Weight (TRIM)	分层式体重管理
Cardiovascular Risk Screenings (CRS)	心血管风险检测
Lighter Life	轻盈人生
Eat it? Count it!	碳水化合物计算法