

MEDIA RELEASE

WOODLANDS HEALTH RECEIVES FIRST PATIENTS; PROGRESSIVE OPENING FROM TODAY

Visitors and patients to the Campus can now enjoy a 1.5 ha Woodlands Healing Garden, the National Parks Board's first park purpose-built for healing and the largest therapeutic garden to date

SINGAPORE, 22 December 2023 – Woodlands Health (WH), Singapore's newest hospital, welcomed its first patients today with Minister for Health, Mr Ong Ye Kung, visiting facilities including specialist clinics and the community hospital ward.

The progressive opening marks a significant milestone in Woodlands Health's journey to begin operations for patients who require rehabilitative and sub-acute care services. In addition to 40 community hospital beds, WH will also offer specialist outpatient services at the Medical Centre for patients with conditions such as asthma and diabetes. Its allied health team will provide rehabilitation services, including speech therapy, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, and podiatry as well as psychology and nutrition and dietetics services. Pharmacy services are also available.

The rest of the hospital, including the Emergency Department and acute wards will progressively open from May 2024. When fully opened, WH will have about 1,000 beds in its fully integrated acute and community hospital, along with almost 400 beds in its Long-Term Care Tower. Provisions are in place to expand to a total of 1,800 beds to meet future needs.

"We were fortunate to be given the opportunity to build an integrated health Campus to provide seamless care to our patients. Our vision from the beginning was to develop a welcoming space for everyone – patients, residents and our healthcare family – to recover, rehabilitate or engage in recreational activities," said Dr Jason Cheah, Chief Executive Officer of Woodlands Health.

"In order to do that, we garnered expert opinions from across a range of industries (such as hospitality and architecture) and sought the views of Woodlands residents as to what they envisioned the Hospital Campus should be. Throughout our development

process, we continually sought to improve our operating systems and introduced new healthcare models to encourage right-siting of care” he added.

Leveraging Technology to Enhance Seamless Care

WH will be the first public hospital to open with the integration of three national IT systems – Next Generation Electronic Medical Record (NGEMR), National Billing System (NBS) and the National Harmonised Integrated Pharmacy System (NHIPS). The three systems are a key part of the Ministry of Health’s plans to consolidate capabilities in care delivery management, patient management and accounting, and pharmacy management. The consolidation would help harmonise workflow, data, and reporting across the public healthcare sector, improve efficiency, and enhance patient experience by making clinical care more seamless. WH and Synapse, the national healthtech agency, have been working closely together to ensure their implementation.

NGEMR is an advanced centralised system that unifies electronic medical records across the National Healthcare Group (NHG) and the National University Health System (NUHS) to enhance care management and delivery. It records the entire patient journey across different care settings, improving care coordination for patients by integrating medical and administrative records and providing quicker, secured access to their latest medical information. NGEMR also enhances decision support with its intelligent alerts and data analytical capabilities, allowing healthcare provider to design sustainable models of care for their patients. Across all three healthcare clusters, including Singapore Health Services (SingHealth), NBS and NHIPS harmonise systems and processes such as patient accounting and pharmacy management – to support healthcare transformation.

NBS is a unified billing system that provides a consistent experience for patients and healthcare professionals. Patients will benefit from an improved healthcare bill presentation with a transparent view of costs and subsidies, while healthcare professionals will experience streamlined billing processes and electronic inter-cluster billing, saving time and effort.

Using a common pharmacy platform, NHIPS provides unified medication dispensing. Serving as a main repository for all medication-related information, NHIPS integrates with over 20 systems including NGEMR and NBS, ensuring system interoperability. This enables pharmacists to deliver a more cost-effective service, while patients benefit from improved accessibility and timeliness to medication for seamless patient care.

A Connected Campus for the Community

The Campus is designed to be open and inviting with green spaces located around and within it to bring people closer to nature. It has also received the Green Mark Platinum certification by the Building and Construction Authority (BCA) and is able to provide thermal comfort in a sustainable way.

WH is fully integrated with the 1.5 ha Woodlands Healing Garden, the National Parks Board's (NParks) first park purpose-built for healing and largest therapeutic garden to date. Designed by NParks in close consultation with WH, Woodlands Healing Garden has been carefully designed to provide visitors and patients with an array of nature-based experiences for mental, emotional, and physical healing and restoration. The therapeutic garden is segmented into four zones to cater to different park visitors: Nature Playgarden, Activity and Wellness Lawns, Healing Forest and Wildflower Terraces.

Caring for the Community

As of December 2023, WH has set up 13 Community Health Posts (CHP) with community partners in the North-Western region. Each CHP anchors a Community of Care (CoC) network, which collaborates with community partners and General Practitioners (GPs) to deliver overall health and social interventions that empower residents to live healthy and fulfilling lives in their neighbourhoods.

Through our Hospital-to-Home (H2H) programme, WH's multi-disciplinary team of doctors, nurses, therapists, dietitians and medical social workers ensures continuity of care beyond hospital walls by providing personalised care for patients in the comfort of their homes. The programme focuses on reducing emergency visits and readmissions by collaborating with community providers who can offer post-discharge follow-up care for patients. In FY2022, more than 1,100 patients were cared for under the H2H programme.

Beyond the Campus, WH has introduced initiatives to help improve the right-siting and accessibility of care within the community such as the GPFirst Programme in the North, the first community-based Urgent Care Centre (UCC) at Kampung Admiralty, and the NurseFirst helpline. These initiatives are in alignment with Healthier SG objectives, to support preventive care in the community.

Through GPFirst, we want to right site patients by encouraging them to visit the family doctor for mild to moderate conditions. 95% of GP clinics in Woodlands have joined the programme. Our UCC provides care for patients who require attention to treat urgent but not life-threatening conditions. It treated over 16,000 patients in FY2022, of which 10% were GPFirst referrals.

Manned by nurses trained in emergency triage, our NurseFirst helpline guides callers in deciding the most appropriate care option based on their non-life-threatening symptoms. In FY2022, our nurses aided close to 3,000 patients and directed them to one of these options – GP, UCC, or Emergency Department.

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About Woodlands Health

Woodlands Health (WH) provides care for the North-Western population in Singapore. From December 2023, we offer rehabilitative and sub-acute care services at our hospital, as well as selected specialist services at our Medical Centre.

The rest of the hospital, including the emergency department and acute wards, will be progressively opened from May 2024 onwards. When the Campus is fully opened, it will have about 1,000 beds in its acute and community hospital which are housed together for better integration of services, along with almost 400 beds in the long-term care tower. Provisions are in place to expand to a total of 1,800 beds to meet future needs.

Beyond our Campus, WH has been serving and empowering residents in their health journey through our Community Health Posts and outreach efforts. We also introduced initiatives to help improve the right-siting and accessibility of care within the community, such as the GPFirst Programme in the North, the first community-based Urgent Care Centre at Kampung Admiralty and the NurseFirst helpline.

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