



*Care
Beyond
Boundaries*

THE
WOODLANDS HEALTH
JOURNEY

Copyright Information

Care Beyond Boundaries: The Woodlands Health Journey

This commemorative publication has been produced in celebration of Woodlands Health's official opening.

Produced by Woodlands Health Corporate Communications Department

Published by Woodlands Health

Copyright © Woodlands Health, 2024

Woodlands Health
17 Woodlands Drive 17
Singapore 737628

Everything we do is about caring for and improving the lives of our patients, community and healthcare family.

Woodlands Health provides care for the 250,000 residents living in the North-Western region of Singapore. Spanning an area covering 7.66 hectares (the size of 11 football fields), the Woodlands Health Campus is designed to ensure seamless transition of care, activate and promote health, and encourage community integration.

Working closely with our partners, we provide a comprehensive range of acute, sub-acute, rehabilitative and transitional care services, to deliver seamless care within and beyond our Campus.

We journey alongside our patients and residents as we work together towards better health, so they can enjoy many more years of healthy life.

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in or introduced into a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or means without the prior permission of the copyright owner.

ISBN: 978-981-94-0232-8
Care Beyond Boundaries: The Woodlands Health Journey

Designed and edited by Mediacorp Pte Ltd
Printed by KHL Printing





Care Beyond Boundaries

THE WOODLANDS HEALTH JOURNEY

Care Beyond Boundaries tells the story of Woodlands Health's 10-year journey from greenfield to the opening of our Campus. Over the years, we've worked hard to shape a place that cares for residents in the North-Western region of Singapore, both inside and outside the hospital. We've set up Communities of Care in neighbourhoods, promoted healthy living and — in the process — brought people together. This book shares our experiences, the challenges we faced and the successes we achieved in our mission to provide *Care Beyond Boundaries*.

VISION

Adding years of healthy life.

MISSION

Everything we do is about caring for and improving the lives of our patients, community and healthcare family.

OUR CORE VALUES

People-centredness: We value diversity, respect each other and encourage joy in work.

Integrity: We commit ourselves to the highest standards of ethical conduct.

Compassion: We care with love, humility and empathy.

Stewardship: We are responsible for the care of our people, patients and population.

OUR PROMISE

Better Health. With You.

We provide quality healthcare to better the lives of our community. Our patients will be cared for – every step of the way.

We work hand in hand with our stakeholders to realise our aspiration towards better care and good quality of life.

We journey alongside patients and their loved ones, our Woodlands Health Family, and community partners as we work towards a common goal.

OUR LOGO

The logo draws inspiration from the Heliconia flower, a tropical plant prized for its beauty and resilience. This flower produces a sweet nectar that attracts hummingbirds, which are essential for its pollination and supporting an ecosystem of life around it.



A flowering bud: synonymous with hope, new beginnings and renewable growth.

Soft petal-like curvatures are used on the edges of the logo to reflect the heliconia inspiration.

One body, three parts: signifying the tripartite partnership between people, patients and staff.

CONTENTS

SECTION I

WHY WE ARE HERE

Take a first look at how our vision and foundational steps evolved to bring Woodlands Health to life over the past decade.

- CHAPTER 01**
8 **THE BEGINNING**
Working with a blank canvas
- CHAPTER 02**
16 **HOW WE CARE**
Shaping a healthier tomorrow
- CHAPTER 03**
24 **FINDING TALENT**
Building our team from scratch





SECTION II

WHAT WE HAVE BUILT

Step by step and brick by brick: How our vision of a healthcare facility materialised through careful planning, design and construction.

CHAPTER 04

36 MADE WITH EMPATHY

A Campus designed for healing

CHAPTER 05

50 FROM THE GROUND UP

Constructing the Woodlands Health Campus

CHAPTER 06

62 THE CARE JOURNEY

Enabling quality healthcare through our infrastructure



SECTION III

WHO WE SERVE

Woodlands Health promotes health and wellness within the community, extending care beyond the hospital.

CHAPTER 07

74 WITHOUT WALLS

Our road map for a healthier community

CHAPTER 08

88 BEYOND THE CAMPUS

Accessing lifelines of care

PART 1

Navigating the pre-hospital care journey

PART 2

The integrated and continuing care journey



SECTION V

WHERE WE ARE HEADING

We reflect on our milestones and chart our future goals as we continue to advance.

CHAPTER 11

140 THE TIME IS HERE!

Welcoming our Woodlands Health Family home

CHAPTER 12

158 COMING FULL CIRCLE

Celebrating our biggest supporters

CHAPTER 13

166 BLUEPRINT TO REALITY

The Woodlands Health journey

CHAPTER 14

176 OUR STORY IN PICTURES

Cherishing the smiles, the bonds and the heart

SECTION IV

WHEN WE COME TOGETHER

There is power in unity within the Woodlands Health Family. We explore the impact of our collective efforts.

CHAPTER 09

102 EMERGING STRONGER

Lessons learnt from the COVID-19 pandemic

CHAPTER 10

116 COMING BACK HOME

Gearing up for opening

PART 1

The Hardware:

Readying our spaces, systems and processes

PART 2

The Heartware:

Nurturing our people





The Woodlands Health Campus is integrated with the Woodlands Healing Garden to promote wellness.

THE STORY OF WOODLANDS HEALTH began 10 years ago with some big ideas and even bigger dreams. Since the announcement, the collective efforts of our pioneering team have propelled us forward. Together, we embarked on a journey marked by innovation, collaboration and the relentless pursuit of excellence. From assembling the right minds to steer the ship, to brainstorming innovative ways of caring for patients and gathering feedback from the community, every step buzzed with energy and creativity. Our team's unwavering dedication paved the way for the opening of Singapore's newest hospital, a testament to a decade of progress and perseverance.



CHAPTER 01

THE BEGINNING

Working with a blank canvas

FOR YEARS, THE LAND where the Woodlands Health Campus now stands was a cherished spot for the people living nearby. Early morning joggers would trace the contours of the old road and the hill, while bird lovers enjoyed watching their loud, colourful pet macaws soar in the sky. This serene corner of Woodlands was a beloved place for the community. With the rapid population growth in Singapore's North-Western region, the tranquil area was chosen to become something special: a new healthcare campus. As more people moved in, Woodlands and its surrounding areas transformed into a lively community. Today, around 250,000 people call these neighbourhoods home.

However, as the population boomed, existing medical facilities neared their limits. Dr Jason Cheah, Chief Executive Officer, Woodlands Health (WH), remembers the urgency of the situation. "At that point in time, the North was already building up very quickly in terms

of population, and the existing hospital in the region was rapidly coming to a point whereby they would be over the capacity that they could cope with," he recalls. "So, the Ministry of Health made a decision to build an additional hospital in the North."

This pivotal decision, which was made about 10 years ago, planted the seed for WH. The vision was not merely to create another hospital, but to rethink how healthcare could be delivered to ensure Singaporeans would be well cared for, both now, and in the future. To undertake this important task, we had to be ready to address three major health challenges facing Singapore: managing the rising frailty of an ageing population, fighting chronic diseases like diabetes, and tackling lifestyle-related health concerns. Thus, WH was conceived with a promise of accessible and adequate care for the community in this region, and ensuring that no one would be left without support.



The vast, open greenfield where residents engaged in leisure activities such as kite-flying and jogging.



A macaw enthusiast proudly showcasing her colourful companion.



Overseas learning journeys to countries such as Taiwan, South Korea and the United Kingdom.



It's important for the planning team to look 20, 30 years ahead: anticipate and plan for the future healthcare needs of the residents. Learn from the best, especially from countries like Japan, with more experience caring for a high proportion of old people.

Mr Khaw Boon Wan, then Grassroots Adviser for Sembawang GRC, where Woodlands Health is situated

The team, led by Ms Jennie Chua, Chairman of the Woodlands Health Development Board Committee, took Mr Khaw's challenge to heart. We had a unique opportunity to start from zero and approach healthcare delivery in a way that was unlike anything else in Singapore. "Rather than following the usual steps – building the acute main hospital first, then the community hospital and other elements as an afterthought – for this project, we looked at what worked, what was needed, and started building it from a blank canvas," Ms Chua explains. This approach allowed our team to design a comprehensive healthcare environment from the ground up.



10 TRANSFORMING CARE IN THE HEART OF A COMMUNITY

After scouting three potential sites, we found a home on a large piece of land, 7.66 hectares to be exact. The location is right between Woodlands Avenue 12 and Woodlands Drive 17, and just a short walk from Woodlands South MRT station.

As an integral institution within the National Healthcare Group overseeing North-West Singapore, WH is poised to be the centrepiece of a comprehensive healthcare service in the region. With an integrated acute and community hospital, and a Long Term Care Tower, the Campus is designed to add up to 1,400 hospital beds and a host of healthcare services for the community. This expanded capacity and capabilities means a lot more help for the residents of Woodlands, Marsiling, Admiralty and Sembawang West.

As more and more people come to live in the North-Western region, we are ready to serve the current and future needs of residents, right in their backyard.

THE START OF SOMETHING NEW

Back in 2014, Mr Khaw Boon Wan, who was then Minister for National Development, set the wheels in motion for what would eventually become WH. He saw an opportunity in Woodlands to do more than just build a new hospital. He envisioned a place that would blend healthcare with the beauty of nature and the comfort of home. The idea was to weave healthcare into the everyday lives of residents, making wellbeing an essential and deliberate part of the community, instead of an afterthought.

"It's important for the planning team to look 20, 30 years ahead: anticipate and plan for the future healthcare needs of the residents. Learn from the best, especially from countries like Japan, with more experience caring for a high proportion of old people," said Mr Khaw, also a Grassroots Adviser for Sembawang GRC then, where WH is situated. "They should aim to create an integrated facility that will deliver quality healthcare efficiently, in an open, welcoming and vibrant environment that residents can access easily."



Opening of the first office at the Ministry of National Development (MND) Building Annexe A in 2014, where countless planning meetings were held.

MS YAN YAN
On person-centred design for a positive and empowering inpatient experience



Scan to watch!

“Our mission has always been to develop a very good hospital while ensuring it is more than a hospital. So, we have layered on a lot of elements, such as placemaking for health activation and social connection, creating a green, healing and sustainable environment, and innovation for a Smart campus.”

Ms Yan Yan, Director, Campus Planning, Woodlands Health

This level of integration, where all elements are planned and built together, introduces an innovative concept for Singapore. In designing WH, our development team drew insights from a wide array of experts – not just from hospitals, but from other settings such as airports and hotels. The goal was to create a Campus that is welcoming and able to accommodate the needs of future generations.

A Campus Designed for Seamless Care

The concept behind our Campus can be best described as “One-ness”. Think of a journey where everything you might need for healthcare is hassle-free and connected – from acute care, through recovery, to end-of-life support – all under one roof. This vision stretches out from the hospital’s Towers into the community and even the homes of patients. The goal is to blur the lines between different care settings, which ensures that patients transition smoothly based on their needs and receive the right care at the right time.

THE ART OF TRANSFORMATION

With the blueprint taking shape, it became clear this project was no ordinary healthcare initiative. As an integrated healthcare campus, WH brings everything you might need for healthcare into one: an acute hospital for life-saving care, a community hospital for recuperation and a facility dedicated to long term care.

Model of a proposed campus design and layout, created during a masterplanning workshop.



MS YAN YAN
On placemaking for health, communal and healing effects

Scan to watch!

“Rather than following the usual steps – building the acute main hospital first, then the community hospital and other elements as an afterthought – for this project, we looked at what worked, what was needed, and started building it from a blank canvas.”

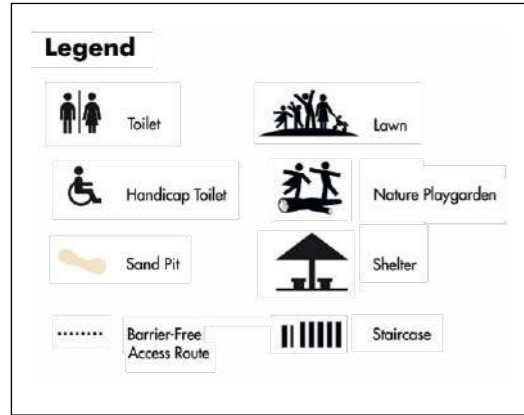
Ms Jennie Chua, Chairman, Woodlands Health Development Board Committee

At the heart of this bold endeavour, Ms Yan Yan, Director, Campus Planning, captures the essence of our mission with clarity and passion. “Our mission has always been to develop a very good hospital, while also ensuring it is much more than a hospital,” she shares. “So, we have layered on a lot of elements, such as placemaking for health activation and social connection, creating a green, healing and sustainable environment, and innovation for a Smart campus.”

This vision, now brought to life by our pioneer team, illustrates a journey beyond the conventional. It was about creating a space where health and wellbeing are woven into the surroundings. And so, the foundation for WH was laid, not just in concrete and steel, but in the goal to redefine healthcare in Singapore – making health and wellness a natural part of everyday life, and reflecting a deep understanding of the community’s needs and a commitment to meeting them.



Woodlands Healing Garden



The Woodlands Healing Garden is designed to provide visitors and patients with an array of nature-based experiences for mental, emotional, and physical healing and restoration. (Credit: National Parks Board)

Enhancing the Patient Experience

Leveraging on technology, we have taken the opportunity to include automation and IT innovations in our design and operations. This adoption is designed to streamline hospital visits for patients – placing them at the centre of care while also reducing the need for labour-intensive, repetitive work so that our healthcare professionals can focus more on clinical and patient care roles.

Another key aspect of our innovative approach is enabling patients to take an active role in their own care. The Patient Bedside Terminal (PBT), for example, allows inpatients and caregivers to access their care plans. It also lets those on a normal diet select their meals, and gives all patients access to educational materials about their conditions and test results.

A Green Oasis for the Whole Community

In collaboration with the National Parks Board, the Woodlands Healing Garden is integrated with the Campus to create a tranquil sanctuary, and features prominent green spaces such as the Healing Forest and Therapeutic Gardens. These lush areas aren't solely about aesthetics – they also support the healing process, and provide a serene escape for patients and the community alike. By integrating these areas, our Campus goes beyond the confines of conventional medical care and offers a holistic approach to recovery and overall wellbeing.

Community surveys were carried out to determine the lifestyle and needs of residents in the North-Western region.



YOUNGER, BUT NOT NECESSARILY HEALTHIER

Woodlands Health provides care for the 250,000 residents living in the North-Western region of Singapore.

National statistics show a growing prevalence of obesity and certain chronic diseases, such as hypertension and chronic kidney disease, among younger people in Singapore.

This region's relatively younger population means that the burden of disease may start earlier in life if residents do not take care of their health. This increases the risk of developing chronic diseases and related complications earlier, raising healthcare costs and decreasing quality of life.





CHAPTER 02

HOW WE CARE

Shaping a healthier tomorrow

FROM A ROUTINE VISIT to your family doctor, to time spent in the hospital, all the way to getting better at home, we want to make sure you get the care you need, right when you need it. This approach to healthcare was one of many creative ideas sparked during the early brainstorming sessions held soon after the Woodlands Health (WH) project was announced in 2014.

Led by Ms Jennie Chua, Chairman of the WH Development Board Committee, these discussions brought together experts from various sectors to dream up what healthcare could look like in the future. They mulled over the future expectations of healthcare, hoping to shape a vision for WH beyond traditional hospital care. Dr Jason Cheah, Chief Executive Officer, recalls the sessions, "There were suggestions for Woodlands Health to integrate care deeper and empower community partners, so that our

journey of care would extend beyond the hospital walls and into the community."

Those discussions helped shape the idea for a healthcare organisation that's focused not just on healing but also on wellbeing, and one surrounded by parks and green spaces. This fresh take on healthcare was driven by senior figures involved in the WH project, including Professor Philip Choo, then Group Chief Executive Officer at National Healthcare Group (NHG). "We had to build a hospital that was different, and it's always easier to do so when you start with a clean slate," Prof Choo says.

To achieve the vision that came out of those early discussions, our team had to strive to do things differently, especially when delivering care to the people in the community.



A community engagement session held at Goodlife @ Marine Parade.



Masterplanning sessions were held to align the design of the Campus with our organisational goals.



Top left and bottom: Various industry experts gathering at an ideas creation session to discuss the future of healthcare in Singapore and how Woodlands Health can be shaped to support it.

PUSHING NEW BOUNDARIES

Every new hospital in Singapore aims to connect with the community it serves to better deliver care. However, Professor Kenneth Mak – who was involved in the early planning stages for WH as then Chairman, Medical Board at Khoo Teck Puat Hospital – believes that the WH team’s active engagement with residents makes it a leader on this front.

He notes that WH has, from the start, encouraged the values of community engagement, proactive health promotion and making a positive impact on society. “These are key tenets of Woodlands Health,” says Prof Mak, currently Director-General of Health at the Ministry of Health. “Among all the healthcare organisations we have now, I dare to say that Woodlands Health is perhaps leading in pushing these values.”

At the heart of our strategy is a strong focus on innovation as a way to continuously improve and adapt to changing healthcare needs. Prof Mak is confident in WH’s ability to lead new developments in Singapore’s healthcare scene. For him, this means the team must never stop striving for change, and must keep enhancing processes and services to better meet future challenges.

“These are key tenets of Woodlands Health. Among all the healthcare organisations we have now, I dare to say that Woodlands Health is perhaps leading in pushing these values.”

Professor Kenneth Mak, Director-General of Health, Ministry of Health, on the importance of community engagement, proactive health promotion and making a positive impact on society

“I had the chance to participate in the ideas creation sessions, where many fresh and innovative perspectives were shared, such as integrating the acute hospital, community hospital and long term care facility in one single development. The team took up the challenge of integrating these ideas together with best practices they have learnt locally and abroad. It is indeed heartening to see Woodlands Health go from an empty plot of land to the expansive campus it is today.”

Mr Ong Ye Kung, Minister for Health



National Healthcare Group's River of Life is framed by these five segments of care.

EMBRACING THE RIVER OF LIFE CONCEPT

Our Model of Care is very much on the same page as NHG's River of Life framework, which, in turn, echoes Singapore's broader healthcare ambitions. The River of Life views healthcare as a journey that evolves as people "flow" through life, meeting each person's needs at every stage. This approach focuses not just on treating you when you're sick but also on keeping you healthy for the long term. It covers everything from minor health issues to more serious problems and even end-of-life care.

Similarly, our Model of Care extends beyond the Campus grounds by working with General Practitioners and healthcare partners in the community to boost preventive care and manage long term illnesses better. This integrated approach strives to provide the right support throughout every stage of care – pre-hospitalisation, hospitalisation, and integrated and continuing care. Central to our mission of keeping residents well and in good health, the Model of Care ultimately aims to address healthcare challenges driven by changing needs and rising costs, all while ensuring seamless, holistic care throughout a patient's journey.

To bring the Model of Care vision to life, colleagues from different departments took part in "masterplanning" sessions to develop creative concepts for the spaces where care would be delivered. In these collaborative meetings, traditional blueprints were swapped out in favour of Post-it Notes and cardboard, allowing the participants to build hands-on mock-up models of their ideas.



Scan to watch!

PROFESSOR PHILIP CHOO
On National Healthcare Group's River of Life framework



Scan to watch!

DR NICHOLAS CHEW
On Woodlands Health's Model of Care

Our Model of Care includes pre-hospitalisation, hospitalisation, and integrated and continuing care initiatives to provide holistic care for residents.



Our team set out to understand the population of the North-Western region to design a healthcare facility that meets their needs.

Among these creative outputs were life-sized cardboard models of pharmacy kiosks. More than just simple mock-ups, these models represented a fresh way to engage with patients. The designs were different from the conventional counters that typically separate pharmacy staff from patients. Instead, these new kiosks aimed to welcome patients into an environment that was more accessible and inviting for collecting medications.

Turning such innovative ideas into tangible realities required an adept team. Thus, Prof Choo brought in top leaders from across NHG to equip WH with the expertise needed to tackle the unique challenges of forging new paths in healthcare. With new ideas and a leadership team in place, we were ready to go out into the community to better understand the residents' circumstances and healthcare issues.

“With the ageing population, we knew we would need another hospital in the Northern region. But it could not be just another hospital. With changing needs and evolving care models, Woodlands Health Campus is a pioneer in having an acute hospital, a community hospital and a nursing home all located in one location. Each of these is expected to provide services beyond their boundaries, deep inside our community, working in partnership with families, primary care professionals and social support services.”

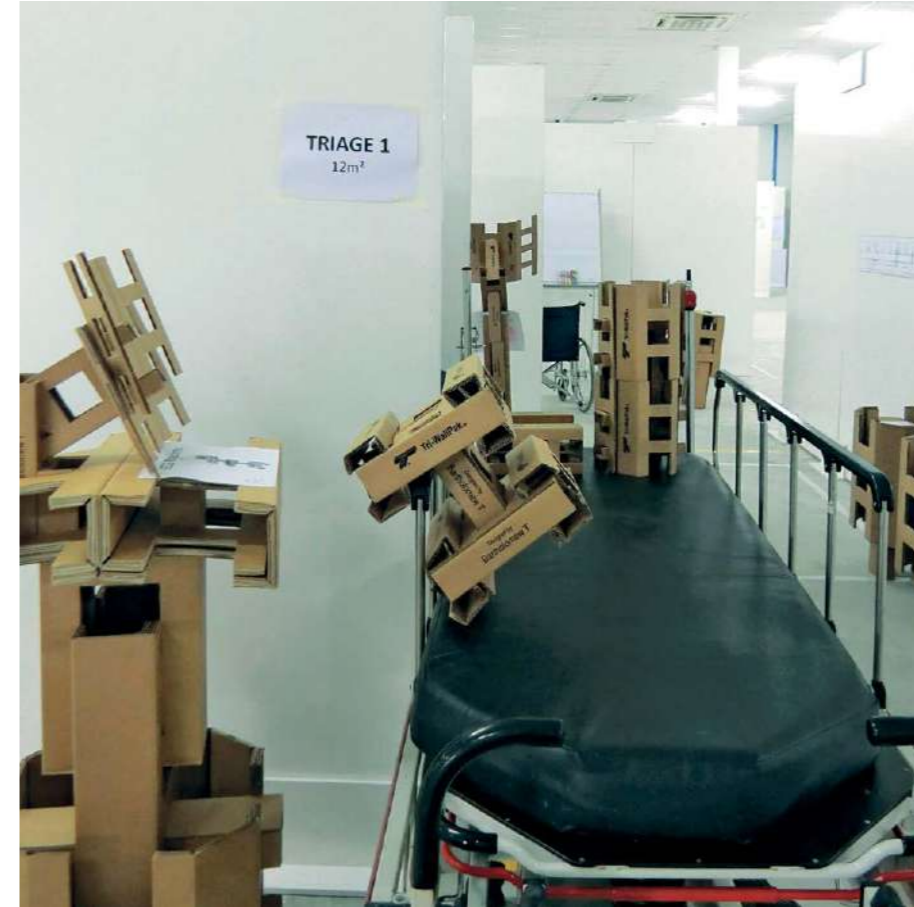
Mrs Tan Ching Yee, then Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Health, and now Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Finance



The Wellness Kampung initiative encourages senior residents to adopt healthier lifestyles, such as eating nutritious food.



Engaging Woodlands residents to find out about their lifestyle and healthcare needs.



Life-sized cardboard mock-ups of various clinical spaces recreate how a patient's experience will be and allow for design tweaks to enhance it.

WHAT'S IN A NAME? WHEN A HOSPITAL IS NOT A HOSPITAL

In healthcare, a name can reveal much about a facility's services and mission. This is certainly true for Woodlands Health. It might seem odd that "hospital" isn't part of our name, especially since it is typical in Singapore. But this deliberate choice fits perfectly with our goal to change how healthcare is delivered.

Originally planned as another hospital for Singapore's North, we had a vision to push the boundaries of conventional care. Our focus is on looking after people not just inside the hospital walls but within the community, starting before admission and continuing after they return home. This is why we chose the name "Woodlands Health", as it reflects our emphasis on broad health and wellness support.

Initially, the name received mixed reactions. But as people began to understand our innovative approaches to healthcare, support grew. As Dr Cheah puts it, "It might not have been clear what Woodlands Health was all about at first, but I think people will get used to it and embrace our mission as time goes on."

“They should feel confident that under our care, every action taken and decision made is with their best interests at heart – ensuring that they feel valued and genuinely cared for throughout their interactions with us.”

Dr Jason Cheah, Chief Executive Officer, Woodlands Health

22 ENGAGING THE COMMUNITY

To ensure that healthcare services were tuned to the specific needs of residents in Singapore's North-Western region, extensive research was conducted. Data and insights were gathered from a wide range of sources, including government agencies such as the Housing & Development Board, the Urban Redevelopment Authority and the Ministry of Health. These discussions were complemented by direct conversations with local residents, enriching our understanding of the community's needs. The insights gathered – such as the area's higher proportion of ethnic minorities and the prevalence of lower-income families – were instrumental in shaping the Campus' design.

Starting in 2016, we began building relationships with organisations in the community, such as schools and an upcoming mosque. This involved holding discussions with community leaders and more in-depth conversations with residents to learn about the health problems people were facing. One notable issue was found: many of those living in rental flats tended to

skip visits to local doctors and went straight to hospital emergency departments for health problems.

To address this, we started a health literacy programme and partnered with social service groups to guide residents towards using community health services first, which would lighten the load on hospital resources. "This work is still ongoing, but it helped us understand what kinds of patients we see," shares Dr Cheah.

A HOSPITAL WITH HEART

Beyond the buildings and services, Dr Cheah hopes that patients will see WH as a place that really cares – from the moment they walk in until after they've gone home. What matters is how good the care is, how safe the environment feels and how professional we are. All these things need to come together to make sure patients have a great experience. "They should feel confident that under our care, every action taken and decision made is with their best interests at heart – ensuring that they feel valued and genuinely cared for throughout their interactions with us," he says.



CHAPTER 03

FINDING TALENT

Building our team from scratch

WHEN WOODLANDS HEALTH (WH) Chief Executive Officer Dr Jason Cheah learnt that he would be leading the team for Singapore's newest hospital in 2014, he called a trusted colleague to ask her to be the project's first hire. "The proposal got her very excited," he recalls. "She didn't even blink an eye and said 'yes!'"

With then Campus Planning Director Ms Polly Cheung by his side, Dr Cheah began identifying key members for this new venture. He was looking for more than just professional qualifications or relevant experience. Team members also needed to be quick on their feet, think outside the box and not be afraid of hard work.

The road to building a healthcare facility from scratch was likely to be full of twists and turns, and the right people who were prepared to tough it out together on this long journey were needed. "I knew that if there were problems between individuals, it could make or break a very small team," says Dr Cheah. "So, I had to be sure that every individual who came on board would be able to fit in with the rest."

Starting from a small office at the MND Building Annexe A in Maxwell Road, our team began a journey in that first year that would eventually lead to the opening of the 7.66-hectare Woodlands Health Campus.

ORIGIN STORIES

WH has since attracted a wide range of individuals from different professions and backgrounds, and different levels of experience. Yet, the one thing we all have in common is how eager we are to try something new – whether it's helping design a new way of delivering healthcare or employing innovative ways of preparing meals for patients.

Many of us wanted to be part of something far bigger than ourselves and contribute to the progress of Singapore's healthcare sector. Here are a few of those inspiring stories from members of Team WH.

Our team knew early on that recruiting talent would be a challenge, especially on such a large scale, so we began the recruitment process years before the Campus was ready and trained the new hires.



ATTAINING HIS DREAM ROLE

Dr Wong Kirk Chuan Chief Operating Officer

Dr Wong seized the chance to be part of the WH start-up team when it came along. To him, the role wasn't just another job, but a "dream" opportunity to help create a new hospital from scratch. "It meant that I was able to influence how a place that was going to do so much good would be formed from the word 'go,'" he remarks. "It was very exciting!"

One of Dr Wong's first tasks at WH was putting together a dedicated team. This feat was made more challenging because, back then, there weren't any human resource policies, let alone a mission statement. Working closely

with Dr Cheah, Dr Wong looked for passionate clinicians who, like him, wanted to be part of this unconventional project.

Dr Wong specifically wanted senior clinicians who were keen to reform healthcare and make a difference. "We were looking for leaders who already knew some of the problems of the current system," he says. "They would be able to provide balanced input and also critique, so that we could be very frank about what we wanted to do differently." This approach was key to putting together a team capable of reimagining healthcare at WH.



GIVING PATIENTS A TASTE OF HOME

Mr Tay Kok Beng

Senior Production Chef, Allied Health Administration

When Mr Tay learnt that WH was planning to shake up the way hospital food was prepared with something called the cook-chill method, he jumped on board. As one of our first employees, he joined the organisation to develop the food services. This cook-chill method allows for meals to be prepared ahead of time without affecting taste or texture. It offered him the chance to do things differently, while providing the crew with a more balanced work schedule.

Mr Tay (second from right), with his Food Services colleagues, showing Minister for Health, Mr Ong Ye Kung, around the kitchen during his visit to the Campus.



Scan to watch!

CHEF TAY KOK BENG

On the cook-chill concept

Mr Tay also wanted to change the common perception that hospital food was bland, and aimed to give patients the taste of nourishing home-cooked food, even when they were away. Meals at WH would nourish and bring comfort to patients, making their stay a little more enjoyable. "We want the patients to feel that when they come to Woodlands Health, the meals here are different," he says. "We want them to be excited about the food options."

AN UNEXPECTED PATH

Mr Muhammad Faiz Bin Abdul Rahmat Mordiffi

Senior Nurse Manager, General Medicine

Mr Faiz began working at WH with a two-year plan to gain some experience at a local hospital before pursuing a career overseas. But the opportunity to work under the guidance of Chief Nurse Ms Pua Lay Hoon – someone whom he had admired as a student attached to Tan Tock Seng Hospital – was too good to pass up, and he ended up staying on. "Lay Hoon was very hands-on and she cares for you," he says. "So, when I found she was going to be Chief Nurse at Woodlands Health, I thought, 'let's give it a try!'"

Starting as a staff nurse nested within the wards of Khoo Teck Puat Hospital, Mr Faiz took on various roles over the years, from helping to set up WH's first pre-operations wards to ensuring patient quality and safety. During the COVID-19 pandemic, he played a crucial role in WH's frontline response at different treatment and care facilities. Now, nearly a decade later, Mr Faiz is looking forward to our official opening and focusing on what matters most to him: ensuring the health and safety of the patients in his care.



Left: Mr Faiz, an NHG Recognition Awards recipient in 2023, receiving the Young Achiever award from CEO Dr Jason Cheah.

Top: Mr Faiz in front of Woodlands Health pre-operations Ward D88 at Yishun Community Hospital, where he was nested.

COMING FULL CIRCLE

Ms Gunavathi D/O Jaganaddan
Executive, Facilities Management

In 2015, Ms Guna joined WH as part of the Campus Planning team. Her job was to help design spaces and workshops essential for the hospital's day-to-day operations. During numerous user group meetings, she wondered how the models and drawings would end up as the physical spaces of the Campus.

By 2023, with the hospital beginning to open in phases, Ms Guna finally had the chance to see how her team's work turned out in real life. The design concepts they had developed were now real, functioning spaces in the hospital. This was a memorable moment for her, similar to returning home after your house had been renovated. "Seeing the hospital finally built felt like coming full circle for me," she says. Today, Ms Guna is part of the Facilities Management team, helping to ensure that day-to-day operations on Campus run smoothly.

Mr Tan (fifth from right) on a learning journey to Taiwan's Tzu Chi Hospital in 2015 to study their model of care.



Ms Guna's role in the Campus Planning team involved designing spaces essential for daily operations.

A RENEWED CHAPTER IN HEALTHCARE

Mr Tan Lai Hong
Deputy Director, Nursing Administration

"When the WH project started recruiting the corporate team in 2014, my ex-supervisor from National Healthcare Group Polyclinics, Ms Polly Cheung, offered me a lead role in Operations or Manpower. I'd just finished a three-year project at a polytechnic then. Returning to healthcare felt like a homecoming, and the Manpower role suited my interest in bringing people together towards a common goal. Those who joined at the beginning might agree it's been a long, challenging, roller-coaster journey. I think the key element sustaining WH's journey has been the team's commitment and ability to make numerous tough decisions – and these we have to continue to uphold."



Ms Chew (last row, third from left) and the Woodlands Health team during a door-to-door outreach event, with the greenfield site in the background.

BEING PART OF SOMETHING BIGGER

Ms Chew May Qi
Assistant Manager, Regional Health

"I was a fresh graduate in 2014, and a job posting for the clinical services planning department of a new hospital in Woodlands caught my eye. It sounded like the perfect opportunity to be part of something bigger that can benefit the wider community.

"The best part of this whole journey so far has been the time I spent on the ground engaging with residents, as well as partners, to learn about the unique Woodlands community. It is very meaningful to be able to be part of outreach initiatives together with like-minded colleagues to empower our residents to live well."

MAGNETS FOR TALENT

Woodlands Health set out to hire some of the best professionals in the industry to lead the various departments. One happy side effect of recruiting such top-notch talent was the ability of these leaders to attract others to join the organisation.

One notable example is Chief Nurse Ms Pua Lay Hoon, an industry veteran who had previously spent 20 years at Tan Tock Seng Hospital, and was well-known for being a highly professional and caring boss.

Urged on by his colleagues, CEO Dr Jason Cheah sought out the highly recommended Ms Pua, and convinced her to come on board over a meal. "I was very lucky to hire a very good Chief Nurse, who is a magnet for people; like bees to honey," says Dr Cheah.

Even Ms Jennie Chua, Chairman of the WH Development Board Committee, recognises Ms Pua's outsized influence in getting others to join. She says, "Lay Hoon is able to get people to join us, and believe in us, because she is a respected figure in the nursing field."

Ms Pua (first row, fourth from left) with a group of pioneer nurses, celebrating Woodlands Health Nurses Day in 2017.





DR NAVIN KUTHIAH
On why he
chose to join
Woodlands Health

Scan to watch!



HERE AND BEYOND

Having recruited our first team members to get the ball rolling, it was time to develop the space that would eventually become Woodlands Health. While putting together a team from scratch was tough, building the Campus itself was no walk in the park and was filled with many unexpected obstacles.

WHAT WE HAVE BUILT



The final structural beam being hoisted at the Topping Out event on 12 February 2022.

WITH THE VISION IN PLACE AND A TEAM raring to go, it was time to start building the physical campus that would become home to Woodlands Health. This massive task involved dealing with multiple government agencies, unexpected problems with the site and, of course, a global pandemic. Our leaders also had to ensure that the Campus' design would support our Model of Care by making hospital stays as seamless and fuss-free as possible. Despite facing many challenges, we pulled together to deliver on our promise of building a healthcare facility that serves the needs of the community.



CHAPTER 04

MADE WITH EMPATHY

A Campus designed for healing

WHEN PLANNING FOR the Woodlands Health (WH) Campus, architect Mr Michael Leong discovered something fascinating during an early visit to the development site. People from the neighbourhood were using this large space for exercise and other leisure activities. An old, unused road that circled the plot had turned into a makeshift running track.

One morning, Mr Leong saw an elderly man walking up a slope, affectionately dubbed “Teletubby Hill” by residents, as it resembled the hill that appears in the famous children’s series from the 1990s. Curious, the architect chatted with the man, excitedly telling him about the hospital that was going to be built there. The man’s reaction surprised Mr Leong; he felt upset

that a place was being taken away from him and his community. The meeting made it clear that the site meant a lot to the people who used it, as it had become a communal space for friends and family to gather and interact.

Like many in the neighbourhood, WH volunteer Ms Priscilla Kumari has fond memories of the area and, in particular, of the same Teletubby Hill. “We used to go there, and my kids would say, ‘Why does the hill look like the one from Teletubbies?’,” she recalls. “They used to play with the toys, so it reminded them of the Teletubbies going up and down the hill. So, I had mixed feelings when I learnt WH was coming up as I do cherish those memories, and memories will stay with you forever.”



When planning the Campus, our team prioritised maintaining a space for residents to continue their leisure activities. (Credit: National Parks Board)



URA's 2024 Master Plan (right) for the Campus shows an integrated layout with the adjacent park, compared to the 2014 Master Plan (left). (Images: Screenshots taken from URA's Master Plan 2014 and 2024)

BLURRING THE LINES BETWEEN NATURE AND HEALTHCARE

Our design team faced a unique challenge: ensuring the new healthcare facility would add something valuable to the community. The goal was to design a Campus that still offered space for hobbies, exercise and socialising, just like before.

This key idea sparked the whole design process for Mr Leong, Senior Executive Director at SAA Architects and Chief Architect for the WH project, and the team. "We therefore asked ourselves a pretty hard question: 'How can we give the people something better than what they had before?'" he recalls.

For instance, in the Urban Redevelopment Authority's (URA) Master Plan of the area, both the park and hospital site were clearly divided by a straight line. One idea our project team had was to "interlock" the Campus with the park next door and extend greenery into the grounds. "It's a win-win solution because both the park users and the hospital users can benefit from being right next to

each other and being among each other," says Mr Leong. "So, the project team went to URA to propose the idea. To our surprise, they said, 'Why not?'"

The National Parks Board (NParks), the agency overseeing the Woodlands park area, also supported the concept due to the healing and therapeutic benefits of nature. This idea led to the creation of the Woodlands Healing Garden, which opened in December 2023. Integrating the Campus with this garden was the result of our team's placemaking efforts – born from a desire to enhance the vibrancy of public spaces using ideas from the community.

However, the integration posed some technical challenges. Among other obstacles, the architects had to account for the possibility of rainwater seeping through the soil in the park and affecting the structures to be built in the basement. Our design team had to make sure the waterproofing and drainage were detailed and installed properly to avoid future maintenance problems in the long term.



DIFFERENT LOOK, SAME SERVICE

Walk through our Campus and you'll notice that each of the key buildings – the General Hospital Towers, Medical Centre and Long Term Care Tower – has a distinctive look.

For us, the vision was clear: move away from traditional hospital design and create something vibrant and welcoming without compromising our organisation's cohesive identity. "Architecturally, it does look like three different buildings," explains Dr Jason Cheah, Chief Executive Officer. "But underlying this eclectic design is the software – the culture of the people, the processes, the workflows – which is a unified one."

Opposite page: The General Hospital Towers (top) and Medical Centre (bottom) boast unique designs that foster a vibrant, welcoming environment while preserving our identity.

The Long Term Care Tower (below) and Medical Centre feature distinct architectural styles that work together as a whole.



Scan to watch!

DR JASON CHEAH
On our Campus' different look, same service





Opposite page: The Medical Centre is prominently visible to those driving along Woodlands Drive 17, which ensures easy access for visitors.



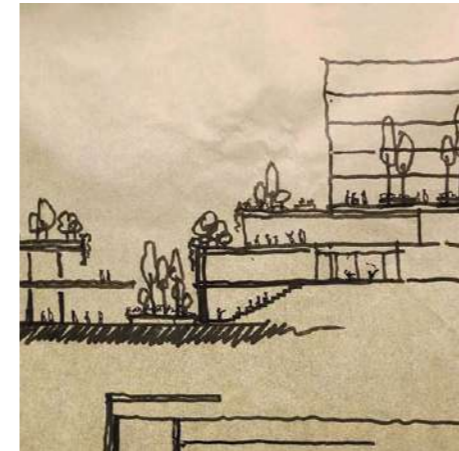
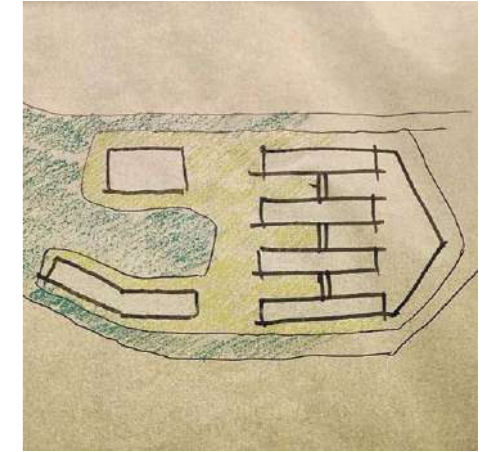
MS YAN YAN
On the importance of wayfinding

Scan to watch!



MR MICHAEL LEONG
On the harmonisation of the site

Scan to watch!



Conceptual drawings of the Campus' rainforest-inspired design by Chief Architect Mr Michael Leong.

MRT station and a bus stop at its doorstep. The location of the Medical Centre is also clearly visible for those driving to the Campus along Woodlands Drive 17.

Accessibility is key, especially in emergency situations. A dedicated entrance for ambulances was built along Woodlands Avenue 12 for quick and easy access to the Emergency Department. Dedicated vertical connections

also link emergency and critical care functions, including the Intensive Care Unit, Cardiac Centre, Diagnostic Radiology and Operating Theatres. These connections are strategically placed for easy transfers of patients throughout their care journey.

A COLOURFUL SOLUTION TO NOT GETTING LOST

The design of our Campus is based on the various layers of a rainforest, from the forest floor at the basement to the canopy at its highest levels. This theme also forms the basis for organising the Campus' various functions and helping people navigate the vast grounds – a process

In fact, looking beyond the façade of the buildings reveals a high degree of integration across the Campus. For instance, through detailed planning and standardisation, the acute and community hospital wards are designed to ensure that staff can move seamlessly between them.

This idea was also key to the design of the childcare centre and the nursing home at the Long Term Care Tower. To promote intergenerational interaction between the children and the seniors, our design team situated the childcare centre on the second floor, directly below

the nursing home that spans the third to sixth floors. This arrangement allows the seniors from the nursing home to engage in their daily activities in close proximity to the children from the childcare centre.

ENSURING ACCESSIBILITY FOR ALL

A comprehensive traffic study was conducted to ensure convenient access for visitors and vehicles to the Campus. It found that the Medical Centre would likely see the most visitors, estimated at around 5,000 each day. As such, the Medical Centre, which houses the specialist clinics, has a direct link to Woodlands South



Opposite page:
A north-south
orientation minimises
heat gain, keeping
the Towers cool.

The mortuary garden
(below) and user-friendly
pharmacy kiosks (left)
exemplify the Campus'
people-centric design.



known as wayfinding. "We placed a strong emphasis on wayfinding so that the users know how to navigate around," explains Mr Leong. "Because getting lost in a hospital is a real problem."

The colours chosen for the different Towers are inspired by the natural hues found in the rainforest, such as the yellow of Heliconia flowers, the blue of water bodies,

“If we want to create a healing campus, then healing needs to be extended not just to the patients, but to their families and friends as well.”

Mr Michael Leong, Senior Executive Director at SAA Architects and Chief Architect for the Woodlands Health project, on the people-centric design approach behind the mortuary garden

and the purple and orange of other various flora. This palette serves as a navigational aid, with each Tower assigned a specific colour.

For example, the Medical Centre adopts blue as its theme, the Long Term Care Tower (Tower E) features orange hues, while the acute and community hospital wards use green, yellow, purple and pink. These colours also feature prominently in key locations, such as staircases and lobby graphics, to help patients find their way more easily.

The Campus has been laid out to resemble a street for easier navigation, too. A central spine – known as "Orchard Road" by colleagues – serves as the main artery, with branches extending east and west to other parts of the site. This "fishbone" structure, with a central corridor flanked by branches, is repeated throughout the Campus to simplify navigation for everyone.



STAYING COOL IN THE HEAT

Building a sustainable Campus was at the top of our to-do list. A key green element of the design is the Campus' integration with the Woodlands Healing Garden; the latter serves as a significant heat sink by absorbing heat from the sun without reflecting it onto surrounding buildings.

Furthermore, Level 1 is designated for pedestrians, with all vehicles routed to the basement. This design prevents asphalt surfaces from absorbing and retaining heat throughout the day, thereby reducing the energy needed for cooling the buildings. In addition, the ground level

is designed as landscaped public spaces that extend seamlessly from the Woodlands Healing Garden.

Keeping the temperature down is especially important in a healthcare facility like ours, where regulations require natural ventilation in Class B2 and Class C wards. To further keep things cool, the Towers are designed with a north-south orientation, minimising solar heat gain from the intense morning and afternoon sun. This orientation ensures that direct sunlight only hits the building sides, not the patient wards. Additionally, tilted and recessed façade windows, along with rooftop farming and



Opposite page: The proximity of the Woodlands South MRT station to the selected Campus site was a key factor in the final decision, as it would provide crucial accessibility for both patients and colleagues.

Aerial view of our Campus



Scan to watch!

“The aim was to plan and build a health campus to serve the North, within budget and on schedule. The healthcare groups’ operational experience and envisioned model of care were essential, while our team’s guidance in translating these needs into workable designs was critical. The planning and design went very smoothly. Notably, we got NParks to integrate their new park – enabling a healing environment for the Campus and a park for the community.”

Er Prof Lau Joo Ming, Member, Woodlands Health Development Board Committee

FINDING THE (ALMOST IDEAL) SITE

The start of Woodlands Health’s journey began with a search for a suitable site for the Campus. This process was harder than expected, taking nine months and covering three to four potential locations. While none of them were perfect – they were either too inaccessible or too noisy – the final site selected along Woodlands Drive 17 ticked most of the right boxes.

It was not ideal; the Seletar Expressway next to it meant more noise, while the neighbouring military air base would restrict the height of the buildings due to security concerns. However, one key attraction was the MRT station nearby, which would be essential for better accessibility.

After weighing all factors, this site emerged as the best of the lot.

For Dr Jason Cheah, the good thing about the location was the park next door, and its potential to be integrated with the eventual Campus. This was in line with WH’s desire to have lots of green areas, making the facility feel more like a welcoming community space rather than just a place to get medical treatment.

landscaping, further reduce heat gain from the sun. Other sustainable features include an acoustic wall that buffers the Campus from expressway noise, and serves as an open-air well that draws in wind to ventilate the rooms.

As for the landscaping, our Campus is home to around 2,500 trees, covering an area of 17,500 square metres, or the size of two-and-a-half football fields. This greenery also helps reduce the urban heat island effect, offsetting approximately 62 tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions due to the lower energy needed to cool the surrounding buildings.

KEEPING THE PEOPLE IN MIND, ALWAYS

The architects worked with design-thinking consultants to ensure that people would always be the top priority in the design of our Campus. This people-centric approach led to several novel ideas, such as using kiosks instead

of counters at the pharmacy to make the collection of medicine more user-friendly.

The people-centric design approach also led to the creation of a “mortuary garden”, made up of green spaces adjoining the four rooms designated for families to spend their final moments with their deceased loved ones. Filled with landscaping and natural daylight, these courtyards provide some comfort to grieving family members in a serene environment.

“If we want to create a healing campus, then healing needs to be extended not just to the patients, but to their families and friends as well,” says Mr Leong. By looking towards nature’s restorative power as an approach, the Campus has been designed as a more person-centred, nature-focused and sustainably designed space for rehabilitation and recovery.



*Healing
Spaces*
WITH
SUNSHINE AND
SERENITY

The spaces on Campus are designed to enhance healing and comfort. Large windows and open areas let in natural light and air, creating a refreshing environment for our patients and visitors.



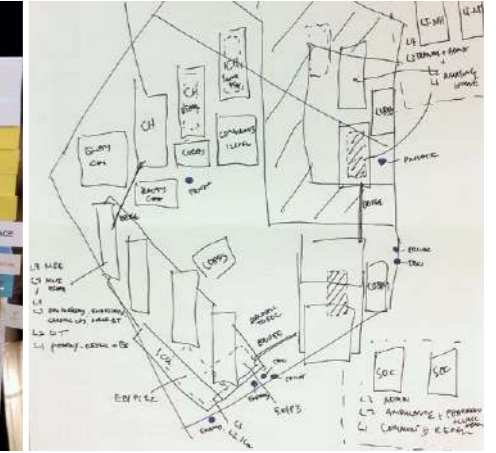
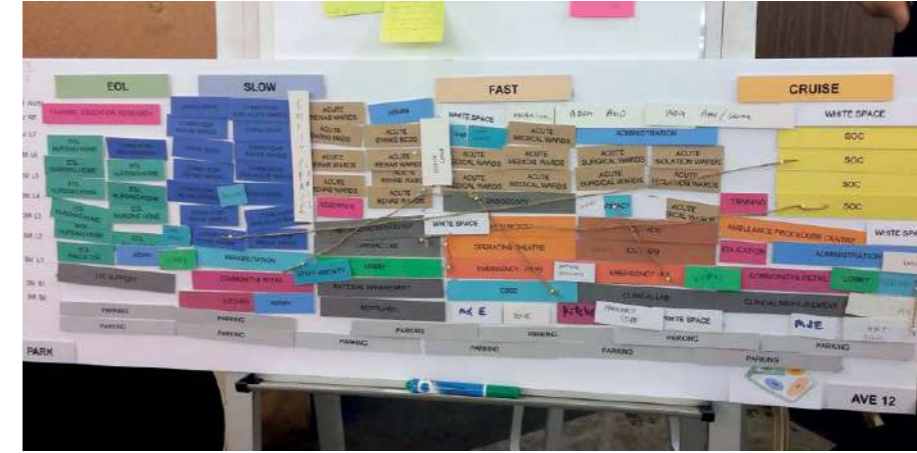
CHAPTER 05

FROM THE GROUND UP

Constructing the Woodlands Health Campus

DRAWING UP the plans for a healthcare facility of this magnitude demanded extensive collaboration among healthcare professionals, architects, engineers, project managers and advocates for residents, patients and caregivers. Throughout our design journey – from masterplanning to reviewing prototypes and selecting materials – we worked tirelessly to ensure every aspect aligned perfectly with the goals of

Woodlands Health (WH). “We spent a few years on the drawing board and in review sessions to improve the design to get a better outcome,” says Mr Chang Peng, Project Director at Ministry of Health Holdings (MOHH), who oversaw the construction of the Campus. “Whether you’re a healthcare worker, a patient or a visitor, we aim to make your journey through WH more pleasant and less stressful.”



Several masterplanning sessions facilitated discussions on how the Campus' design could align with our goal of providing seamless care.



IT TAKES A VILLAGE

One important decision was choosing the right construction firms. This required a blend of international and local expertise familiar with projects of this scale. Ultimately, we chose a consortium of construction companies with extensive experience in major healthcare projects, both in Singapore and abroad.

Collaboration also extended to various government bodies, including working with the Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA) and National Parks Board (NParks) to seamlessly integrate the Campus with the adjacent parkland and create "a hospital in the park, and a park in the hospital", and with the Land Transport Authority (LTA) to ensure convenient access to the Woodlands South MRT station.

Opposite page: Prototypes and full-scale mock-ups ensuring that each material and fitting used around the Campus was selected after careful consideration and rounds of testing by the clinical and nursing teams.

The development was made even trickier as design and construction had to be concurrent to speed up the construction timeline and incorporate the latest design requirements as much as possible. This meant we had to be flexible and ready to respond quickly, maintaining open lines of communication and working together without sacrificing quality.

"When doing design and construction phases at the same time, we need to be very tight with change management," explains Ms Yan Yan, Director, Campus Planning. "Whenever there's a change, we need to immediately revisit the drawing board to see how it affects the workflow, or vice versa, impacting construction."

The groundbreaking ceremony on 18 April 2017 not only marked the beginning of construction but also laid the physical and symbolic foundation for our future healthcare facility – setting the stage for what was to come.



Left: Mr Ong Ye Kung (second from left), in a discussion with members of the WH Development Board Committee in 2015.

Below: With shovels in hand, then Minister for Health, Mr Gan Kim Yong (second from left); Mr Amrin Amin, then Grassroots Adviser, Sembawang GRC; and Ms Jennie Chua, Chairman, WH Development Board Committee, plant a *Pometia pinnata* tree (commonly known as Kasai) at the groundbreaking ceremony in 2017.



MR CHANG PENG
On the trouble with tunnels

Scan to watch!



Above: The main contractors were selected based on their experience and expertise in major healthcare projects.

EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED

Then, in 2018, the construction crew carving out the foundations for the Campus made a surprising discovery. Their digging had unintentionally caused movement in the nearby MRT tunnel. Realising this, they paused excavation to address the issue. For nearly nine months, work was suspended as we dove into engineering studies, deployed monitoring gear to watch over the movements and carried out ground improvement works to lessen the impact of their digging on the tunnel.

This hiatus was just one of several bumps in the road that delayed the Campus' construction. Indeed, the tunnel incident was just a taste of greater challenges ahead, and served as a stark reminder that we had to always be ready to navigate any surprises that come along.

“When doing design and construction phases at the same time, we need to be very tight with change management. Whenever there's a change, we need to immediately revisit the drawing board to see how it affects the workflow, or vice versa, impacting construction.”

Ms Yan Yan, Director, Campus Planning, Woodlands Health, on the building process

The groundbreaking ceremony on 18 April 2017 was a significant milestone as it marked the beginning of our vision coming to fruition.





Workers receiving special boxed bento meals on 26 July 2023 to celebrate the achievement of 40 million safe man-hours.

WHEN THE GOING GETS TOUGH, THE TOUGH GET INNOVATIVE

After resolving the MRT tunnel problem in 2019, the project faced an even greater setback: the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020, which pushed the project timeline back by about two years.

In April 2020, Singapore's nationwide lockdown brought all construction to a standstill. Adapting to these unprecedented challenges, our teams pivoted to working remotely – a big change for a project typically reliant on in-person coordination. Meetings were held virtually and operations managed digitally, which allowed the project to inch forward while keeping everyone safe.



A tense moment for us, when construction came to a halt due to the COVID-19 Circuit Breaker.

“I vividly remember walking through the construction site on the evening before the Circuit Breaker. The moment was filled with uncertainty and fear; all we could do was prepare as best as we could.”

Mr Chang Peng, Project Director at Ministry of Health Holdings, recalling the feelings of dread the day before the Circuit Breaker

Even as Circuit Breaker restrictions eased later that year, the project struggled to rebound due to a depleted workforce – many workers had returned to their home countries and were unable to return. Complications continued with difficulties in securing building materials as international borders snapped shut. Our project team reached out to alternative suppliers in Europe and the United States as the usual sources in Malaysia and China became inaccessible. It was a tremendous effort to coordinate procurement and delivery, storage and labour availability, while continuing to push the construction forward.

As if the pandemic's disruptions weren't enough, several subcontractors working on the project began to face financial troubles and were at risk of closing down. Fortunately, many weathered the storm, buoyed by government financial support. To further aid these firms, our project management approach was revised to improve cashflows for smaller firms.

Indeed, the times were grim for our planning team. As Mr Chang recalls, “I have a vivid memory of walking through the entire construction site on the evening before the Circuit Breaker was to begin. It was a moment filled with uncertainty and fear. All we could do was prepare as best as we could.”

In the midst of this upheaval, the Campus' design features also had to be adapted to be primed for any future large-scale pandemic. This required major changes midway through construction, such as adding airborne isolation facilities and enhancing air filtration systems to



MR CHANG PENG
On getting the hospital pandemic-ready

Scan to watch!

safeguard the hospital against future outbreaks. Much of the learning from managing COVID-19 was distilled and incorporated into our design, making us a unique healthcare facility that was “designed and built amidst a global pandemic”.

Despite these hurdles, the commitment from everyone involved – colleagues, contractors and suppliers – was extraordinary as we pushed the limits of our roles to overcome the challenges standing in our way. “It takes a lot of commitment on the part of everyone to want to go the extra mile to achieve this,” says Ms Yan. “The concept of ‘organisation first before individual, organisation first before department’ was truly happening in this project.”

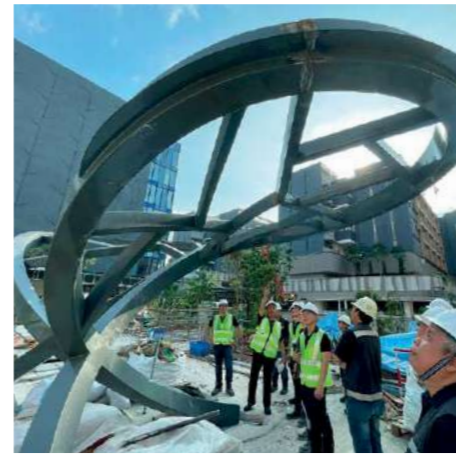
“It takes commitment from everyone to go the extra mile. The concept of ‘organisation first before individual, organisation first before department’ was truly happening here.”

Ms Yan Yan, Director, Campus Planning, Woodlands Health, on how colleagues overcame pandemic disruptions



DR TAN THAI LIAN
On forming the Infectious Disease Outbreak Committee

Scan to watch!



A ROCKY SURPRISE

When laying the foundation for the Woodlands Health Campus, the contractors stumbled upon a sizable hiccup – a massive rock formation squatting right where they intended to construct the basement carpark. This geological surprise offered a tough choice: blast through the rock or redraw the architectural plans. Opting for creativity over destruction, our team redesigned the basement into an L-shaped layout that skilfully sidestepped the unyielding rock.

Not wanting to waste what nature had placed in their path, the architects embraced the challenge and incorporated pieces of the blast rock into parts of the Campus itself. Fragments of the rock now grace the main signage, enrich the landscaping and are even featured in the Learning Space. “We wanted to respect this rock that was here before us, and so the rock became a story for us to build upon,” explains Mr Michael Leong, Senior Executive Director, SAA Architects and Chief Architect for the WH project. This imaginative approach not only solved a construction hurdle but also embedded a layer of meaning and heritage into the Campus’ foundation.

Opposite page: The Topping Out Ceremony on 12 February 2022; above: the installation of the butterfly pavilion structure within the Campus.

The feature wall at the main entrance utilises rocks that were removed from the ground on which the Campus sits.

TOPPING OUT AND TAKING STOCK

On 12 February 2022, the Campus reached a crucial point in construction: the Topping Out ceremony, which is a tradition that marks the placement of the final beam, or its equivalent, atop a structure. For us at WH, the event carried extra weight (no pun intended!), coming after years of diligent planning and overcoming numerous challenges. For all involved, it was far more than a ceremonial formality; it was a poignant time for reflection and celebration.

This milestone also lit our path ahead and lifted the morale of the entire team. It served as a powerful reminder of the progress made and spurred us on towards the finish line. With the main construction phase behind us, the focus shifted to outfitting the interiors and getting the critical systems up and running – key steps in bringing our Campus to life. “It was exactly the good news we needed,” recalls Mr Chang. “It showed us all that our hard work was paying off and that we were really getting closer to our goal.”

TIMELAPSE
From foundation
to completion



Scan to watch!

MR MICHAEL LEONG
On the surprises
during construction



Scan to watch!



TURNING
PLANS
INTO *Reality*

Planning a healthcare facility of this scale took a lot of teamwork from medical professionals, architects, engineers and the community. Our Woodlands Health team spent two years in masterplanning sessions to ensure the Campus would meet our goals.



CHAPTER 06

THE CARE JOURNEY

Enabling quality healthcare through
our infrastructure

THINK OF OUR CAMPUS as a real-life representation of our Model of Care, where patients experience a seamless healthcare journey beyond the usual hospital setting. Here, care isn't delivered only within the hospital walls; it also includes support before residents require a visit to the hospital, and after they return home following an acute episode.

At Woodlands Health (WH), all of our services are designed with the community's needs in mind. To make this a reality, our planning team spent a lot of time

gathering residents' feedback, which was reflected in the development of the infrastructure and design features.

Ultimately, the goal of our Model of Care is twofold: to avoid the need for hospital admissions when possible and, if a visit is necessary, to make it as short and comfortable as possible. "So, even as we design care within the hospital, we are also exploring ways to have people not utilise the hospital, which is a bit of a strange idea," admits Dr Nicholas Chew, Chairman, Medical Board.



“So, even as we design care within the hospital, we are also exploring ways to have people not utilise the hospital, which is a bit of a strange idea.”

Dr Nicholas Chew, Chairman, Medical Board, Woodlands Health, on our Model of Care

Dr Jason Cheah sharing the layout of the Campus with guests at the groundbreaking ceremony on 18 April 2017. (From left: Ms Jennie Chua, Chairman of Woodlands Health Development Board Committee; Mr Khaw Boon Wan, then Grassroots Adviser, Sembawang GRC; Mr Gan Kim Yong, then Minister for Health; Madam Halimah Yacob, then Grassroots Adviser, Marsiling-Yew Tee GRC; Dr Lim Wee Kiak, Grassroots Adviser, Sembawang GRC; Mr Lam Pin Min, then Minister of State, Ministry of Health; and Dr Cheah, CEO of Woodlands Health).



The central induction area where patients are induced in a controlled environment, with senior consultants overseeing the procedures to ensure everything goes smoothly.

A care team with a patient in the Emergency Department's resuscitation room.

THOUGHTFUL DESIGN FOR TOP-NOTCH PERSON-BASED CARE

Every part of the Campus is carefully planned to support our Model of Care, ensuring that each patient gets the best care possible. For instance, the Emergency Department has the resources to treat less severe conditions immediately, without needing to admit patients. Although all hospitals strive for this kind of efficiency, we had the unique advantage of designing our Emergency Department from the ground up, creating the ideal space and set-up for these processes. “This is one way we’ve been able to benefit from having a brand-new setting that allows us to plan for these things, and be able to do things differently,” says Dr Chew.

The thoughtful design goes further, with the Emergency Department vertically connected to other critical care functions, including the Intensive Care Unit, Cardiac Centre, Diagnostic Radiology and Operating Theatres, to ensure timely care can be provided. Acute and community hospital wards are also directly connected,

making it easier for patients to move on to the next step of care if needed. What’s more, these wards are modular in design, allowing them to be swiftly adapted to serve different purposes, depending on how many patients there are and what they need.

Another standout feature introduced is the central induction area outside the surgery rooms where patients receive anaesthesia before going into surgery – a significant change from the usual method where patients are induced in their respective operating theatres. This method allows for a more controlled environment, with various checkpoints in place and senior consultants present to ensure that the procedure goes smoothly. It also allows for a faster turnover for operating theatres and shorter waiting time for patients to receive surgery. However, this does not make things easier as our team must perform extra checks before moving patients, now under anaesthesia, to their surgery rooms. Through rigorous practice and drills, WH has honed this process to ensure the safety of every patient.



Opposite page: Comprising healthcare professionals across different specialties, our care teams regularly discuss each patient's care plan to ensure seamless and holistic care.

MULTIDISCIPLINARY TEAMS OFFER PERSONALISED CARE

Our integrated facilities on Campus enable our doctors and nurses to provide care to patients during recovery without needing to move them around much. This set-up helps our team focus on healing right where the patients are and as they progress in their healthcare journey. The goal is to give each patient the personalised care they need quickly, so they can go home sooner and in better health than when they arrived.

Our Model of Care for hospitalisation focuses on each patient's unique needs instead of just treating diseases or certain body parts. This comprehensive approach recognises that people often have several health issues at the same time, not just one. Our care team considers all aspects of a person's health for a holistic care plan.

Patients at our Emergency Department are assessed and grouped according to their care needs.

The process begins by sorting patients into groups based on their care needs. At our Emergency Department, this grouping happens promptly, and patients are sent for diagnostic checks to determine the health issues that require attention. If a doctor decides a patient should stay in the hospital, the patient is sent to a ward that groups those with similar health issues, or comorbidities, such as frailty.

This approach requires our care teams to be organised differently than traditional hospitals. Teams are made up of doctors with broad general care skills to look after patients in the wards. "I'd say about 80 per cent of patients do not need specialty knowledge in hospital care, so the internist should be able to look after most of these cases," explains Dr Tan Thai Lian, Divisional Chairperson, Division of Medicine.





As such, our doctors are encouraged to maintain a wide range of general medical skills even as they hone their specialties. This dual focus allows them to care for patients with various conditions more completely. For patients, this means they deal with just one care team, avoiding the need to be transferred between different specialists.

Doctors aren't the only ones to play a key role in these care teams. Nurses, therapists and medical social workers are also vital. Together, these different professionals work in collaborative "huddles" to share ideas and strategies. This multidisciplinary approach not only boosts the quality of care but also fosters a strong sense of trust and cooperation among colleagues from various disciplines.

As the coordinators of these care teams, nurses are heavily involved in deciding when a patient should move to the next stage of care for the best outcomes.

“**Among the most critical tasks for nurses in the inpatient ward is to transition the patient seamlessly from the hospital to the community, or to the patient's home.**”

Ms Pua Lay Hoon, Chief Nurse, Woodlands Health, on a key role of nurses

This includes the transition from the Emergency Department to acute care, acute care to community care, and eventually back home. They work closely with the rest of the team to map out each patient's care plan.

After a patient leaves the hospital, nurses continue to provide effective care and guidance in the home setting, helping to reduce the chances of the patient needing to be readmitted. "Among the most critical tasks for nurses in the inpatient ward is to transition the patient seamlessly

Opposite page: To meet the needs of patients with multiple complex issues or comorbidities, our doctors are encouraged to maintain a wide range of general skills.

Collaborative "huddles" are an important part of our culture, and were introduced at the pre-operations wards even before the Campus opened.





The ceiling hoist in the ward not only makes the repositioning of a patient more comfortable, but also assists in their rehabilitation and physiotherapy through gait training.



We strive to ensure patients maintain or improve their mobility, functional abilities, self-care and health literacy during their stay with the aim for them to return home in a better condition than when they arrived.

Ms Pua Lay Hoon, Chief Nurse, Woodlands Health, on allowing patients to take charge of their own recovery

from the hospital to the community, or to the patient's home," says Ms Pua Lay Hoon, Chief Nurse.

EMPOWERING PATIENTS IN THEIR OWN CARE

At WH, our patients are encouraged to take charge of their own recovery. The Campus' design and infrastructure are set up to do just that.

For instance, it's important for patients, especially seniors, to start moving soon after surgery to maintain their mobility. So, ceiling hoists have been installed in the wards to help patients move safely on their own, reducing the risk of falls and allowing them to take an active role in recovery. "We strive to ensure patients maintain or improve their mobility, functional abilities, self-care and health literacy during their stay with the aim for them to return home in a better condition than when they arrived," says Ms Pua.

This active approach involves perioperative medicine, which encompasses care before, during and after surgery to optimise patients' health and improve surgical outcomes. Our Health Optimisation, Perioperative programme – or simply, HOPE – brings together various departments such as Geriatrics, Anaesthesia and Surgery to provide well-rounded and comprehensive care.

We have also created spaces that aid in recovery. For instance, our Campus gracefully melds with the neighbouring Woodlands Healing Garden, offering serene areas for patients and residents to unwind and reconnect with nature. Cosy nooks also provide places to recharge. All in all, our Campus is designed to provide a hassle-free experience for patients, with the aim of getting them back home healthy as quickly as possible.

DESIGNED WITH CARE AND HEALING IN MIND

The design and infrastructure of the Campus support our Model of Care, which aims to offer patients a seamless, efficient and comfortable healthcare journey. Here are four innovative features that help achieve this:

Emergency Department in close proximity to other critical services.

Our Emergency Department is vertically connected to other critical care functions including the Intensive Care Unit, Cardiac Centre, Diagnostic Radiology and Operating Theatres to ensure timely care can be provided. This set-up ensures seamless patient care, especially for those with urgent life-threatening conditions.

Integrated acute and community hospital wards.

Our acute and community hospital wards are located in the same building, which means they are part of the same organisation. Patients can be moved from acute to community hospital beds without the hassle of going to a different building. This also enables our care team to visit patients across the different settings with ease.

Serene gardens for patients, staff and visitors.

Located next to the medical facilities, the easily accessible and tranquil Woodlands Healing Garden helps with mental and emotional wellbeing, along with physical rehabilitation. Research shows that green spaces in hospitals help reduce stress and improve health outcomes.

Features that aid recovery.

Many infrastructural features on Campus are designed to help our patients recover quickly. For instance, ceiling hoists help patients, particularly seniors, get out of bed quickly after surgery, which speeds up recovery while maintaining their independence.

DR TAN THAI LIAN

On the integrated acute and community hospital



Scan to watch!



WHO WE SERVE

A healing space for patients, colleagues and the community.

AMID SINGAPORE'S EVOLVING HEALTHCARE

ecosystem, Woodlands Health was tasked with reshaping how healthcare is delivered to the population in the North-Western region. Beyond caring for unwell individuals within the hospital confines, the focus is also on fostering health and wellness among residents. To achieve this, our journey begins where the residents are — within the community itself. Through our preventive and community care approach, as well as pre-hospital and integrated and continuing care initiatives, we aim to empower everyone to live and age well at home.



CHAPTER 07

WITHOUT WALLS

Our road map for a healthier community

FOR YEARS, the senior couple stoically managed life at home, relying on each other for support. But when one of them falls and breaks a hip, their world turns upside down. Without a lifeline in their time of need, getting back on their feet becomes an insurmountable task. A downward spiral ensues. If the couple's struggle sounds familiar, it's because it is. Their plight is one that our Chief Operating Officer Dr Wong Kirk Chuan and colleagues encounter far too frequently here at Woodlands Health (WH).

In 30 to 40 years, Singapore has evolved from a young nation to one that is rapidly ageing. In 2010, about one in 10 Singaporeans were aged 65 and above. By 2030, almost one in four will be over 65. With an ageing population come more complicated health challenges. While acute episodic conditions were more common in the past, the last decade has seen what Dr Wong describes as a "tsunami" of patients needing complex care. Without the right support system, the transition from living well to struggling can be swift – and unforgiving.



Engaging the population we serve at the NTUC Health Active Ageing Hub at Admiralty Medical Centre.



Reaching out to the Marsiling community to find out about their healthcare needs and share more about health literacy.



ON A MISSION TO BOOST POPULATION HEALTH

Recognising the seismic shift in healthcare needs, our clinical team understood that radical changes were necessary to manage the health of the population we serve in the North-Western region. Dr Wong describes the vision for an innovative yet sustainable healthcare ecosystem. "What we wanted from the outset was for WH to be very integrated into the day-to-day lives of the residents," he says. "In doing so, we hope to change mindsets on what good health means."

Part of the broader shift towards sustainable healthcare was the adoption of the healthcare funding model known as capitation. While this model is used in countries like Sweden and the United States, it is new to Singapore. The Government has mandated that all public healthcare institutions in Singapore adopt this funding model, with WH among the first to do so.

The capitation approach supports our Model of Care by providing a fixed amount of funding from the Ministry

of Health for each resident. This incentivises us to keep the North-Western region's population healthy and minimise visits to hospitals and clinics – reinforcing our commitment to promoting and maintaining community health.

The question arises: can our teams not only care for the unwell but also empower residents to lead healthier lives and avoid severe health issues, such as those that might occur after leaving the hospital? Can we help people live and age well at home? The answer is yes. "What we hope to reinforce is that the hospital is a last-resort measure," Dr Wong states. "It takes care of you when you are ill, but there's also much we can do to prevent people – even those with chronic diseases – from falling ill and to help them continue functioning well in the community."

MEETING RESIDENTS WHERE THEY ARE

With the shift towards preventive care, we set out to meet the residents in the North-Western region where they



Our colleagues sharing about healthy living with residents at the Healthier SG roadshow in Kampung Admiralty.

Opposite page: Health coaches providing lifestyle coaching to residents at the opening of a Community Health Post at Sunlove Golden Saffron.

are: in their homes and neighbourhoods. This endeavour began long before our doors opened in December 2023. As early as 2016, we dedicated teams to reach out to residents and empower them in their health journeys.

78 There was an urgency to set the wheels in motion, given the findings from a 10-year study by National Healthcare Group's Health Services and Outcomes Research department. Despite being relatively younger than the rest of Singapore, the North-Western region's population was at risk of higher rates of chronic diseases at an earlier age.

This was echoed in the National Population Health Survey 2020, which found that residents in the Northern region of Singapore grapple with higher rates of obesity and chronic disease than the national average. "That was the impetus, why the leadership felt that the community work would need to start even before the bricks and mortar were laid," shares Ms Yan Yan, the Executive Director of the Regional Health Office at WH.

LAYING THE FOUNDATION IN THE COMMUNITY

To help residents live healthy and fulfilling lives, our clinical leadership formed networks called "Communities of Care". Each Community of Care is anchored by a Community Health Post and brings together various

partners to provide a range of health and social services focused on the needs of the residents.

"The idea is to work with different partners to form a caring ecosystem because we know that there are many social determinants of health," Ms Yan says. "A person who's unhealthy probably suffers from other non-medical factors that influence health as well, for example, loneliness, financial distress and so on. Therefore, health may not be at the top of their agenda."

In April 2020, our Communities of Care kick-started with eight Community Nurse Posts, with three more added the following year. In 2022, these posts were rebranded as Community Health Posts, and were nested at nearby Active Ageing Centres in the region, faith-based nodes such as Yusof Ishak Mosque and Covenant Evangelical Free Church, and Woodlands Regional Library.

Each Community Health Post serves as a neighbourhood touchpoint, where residents are supported by a multidisciplinary team comprising community nurses, health coaches and care coordinators. While the nurses focus on the clinical care of residents with more complex health issues, the health coaches empower those with stable conditions to take charge of their health through lifestyle changes.





Health Coach Haikal Elmi discussing personal health goals with Mdm Fatimah.

GETTING AHEAD OF THE CURVE

In October 2022, our Regional Health Office kicked off our first community-based screening programme called HEALTH (Helping Everyone Achieve Lifelong Health). This programme provides residents aged 40 and above with easy access to health screenings, aiming to prevent or delay the progression of the most common chronic diseases in Singapore, such as diabetes, high blood pressure and high cholesterol.

By working with grassroots and community partners, such as the People's Association, Silver Generation Office and Active Ageing Centres, we reached out to residents in various population segments who had not undergone prior health screening. Many were unaware that they were at risk of developing chronic diseases.

During the first HEALTH screening at a Community Health Post in the Care Corner Active Ageing Centre in Marsiling, 70 per cent of the participants were aged 40 and above and had never been screened before.

A key difference in our community-based screening efforts is the active follow-up of residents found to be in the high-risk category or newly diagnosed with a

“I didn't know I was at risk of frailty before joining the programme. I joined to gain more knowledge, such as advice on exercising and what I should eat. This has been very helpful.”

Madam Fatimah Binte Arib, a Woodlands resident who benefited from our outreach efforts

chronic disease. Those with borderline or abnormal results are referred for post-screening care, with our primary care partners (General Practitioners). If required, our Community Health Teams also assist with social support.

Among the residents who have benefited from our outreach efforts in detecting health conditions early is Madam Fatimah Binte Arib. In her 70s, Mdm Fatimah discovered that she was at risk of frailty – the leading cause of poor health and healthcare utilisation – after taking part in our CommFit programme. CommFit targets Woodlands residents at risk of frailty or becoming frail. After they're assessed, our team follows up with exercise and nutrition advice, caregiver support, medication reviews, and fall risk assessments at home.

With advice from a health coach, Mdm Fatimah started exercising regularly and made dietary tweaks to improve her health. “I didn't know I was at risk of frailty before joining the programme,” she says. “I joined to gain more knowledge, such as advice on exercising and what I should eat. This has been very helpful.”

Apart from health screening programmes, our other efforts include Share a Pot, which provides nutritious meals to seniors, and Doctors on Wheels, which helps residents manage chronic diseases by bringing care closer to them.



Residents enjoying a healthy and nutritious meal at Share a Pot.

EDUCATION TO EMPOWER CHANGE

To promote a change in mindset about health, our team thought creatively. Beyond traditional community spaces, our outreach efforts extended to schools and workplaces. For example, the Community of Hope (CHOPE) X School and CHOPE X Work initiatives were designed to raise awareness about healthy living among students and companies in the North-Western region.

In the CHOPE X School programme, students participate in workshops and events, and play games that centre on topics such as healthy eating and mental resilience, all designed to encourage them to take charge of their health and wellbeing from a young age. Meanwhile, the CHOPE X Work programme encourages companies to create healthier work environments.

We have also raised awareness of Advance Care Planning in the community through community-based talks, workshops and outreach booths. These initiatives help residents think through their personal values, beliefs and preferences in planning for their future healthcare needs.

One memorable interaction occurred at an outreach event in Kampung Admiralty in February 2023, where a crucial conversation was initiated with a senior concerned about her husband's declining health and memory. The couple, having no children and relying solely on each other for daily support, benefited from the discussion. It provided an opportunity to introduce the concept of Advance Care Planning and guide the senior on the importance of managing medical emergencies when decision-making becomes challenging.

THE WARM, FRIENDLY FACES ON CAMPUS

At WH, our Patient Experience Office has taken community involvement to the next level by enlisting the help of resident-volunteers. By bringing familiar faces into the fold, we aim to empower the community towards better health and provide additional support for patients and visitors on Campus.

Christ Church Secondary School students in a hearty conversation about healthy living with seniors at a befriending session.



Educating seniors on making informed decisions about future care preferences based on their values, beliefs and goals of care at an Advance Care Planning session.



Among our dedicated volunteers is Woodlands resident Ms Priscilla Kumari. Since the Medical Centre's opening on 22 December 2023, she's been one of more than 70 volunteers who have signed up to lend a helping hand. Resident-volunteers are trained to take on roles such as Digital Master, Bedside Befriender, Patient Advocate, Health Educator, Navigation Buddy and Peer Support Group Facilitator.

As a Navigation Buddy, Ms Kumari is a warm and friendly face, helping patients and visitors find their way around the Campus and acquainting them with the available



Our Community Health teams empower residents to take charge of their health in the long run. This ties in with our efforts to make care more accessible within the community, boost preventive health incentives and create a holistic, sustainable system of care in the North-Western region.





Woodlands Health volunteer Ms Priscilla Kumari with a Patient Service Associate.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

In 2022, Woodlands Health scheduled approximately

500 HEARING
200 VISION
180 DENTAL FOLLOW-UP

appointments for seniors showing early signs of functional decline and needed further assessments. It was part of the Project Silver Screen organised by the Health Promotion Board.



Since October 2022, a total of

340+

RESIDENTS AGED 40 AND ABOVE

who had not attended health screenings previously were screened for chronic diseases under a community-based screening programme called Helping Everyone Achieve Lifelong Health (HEALTH).

ALMOST NINE IN 10, or ABOUT 85.5%, had borderline or abnormal results.



13 WH GPs who partnered the WH HEALTH programme reviewed a total of

230+

residents with borderline/abnormal health screening results post health screenings.

(Note: The remaining residents with borderline/abnormal results did not attend a review, and results were mailed to them instead.)

Since 2022, the Community Health Team has supported more than

5,000

residents in their journey towards healthier living.

In 2022 and 2023, the Hospital to Home (H2H) programme has facilitated the safe and timely transition of more than

2,000

discharged patients back to their homes.



Since May 2023, over

1,000

patients received inpatient-equivalent care services in the comfort of their homes with support from the WH@Home team.

From September 2023, WH has also started offering support to

2 NURSING HOMES

in the Woodlands region to enhance the care of their residents through the Nursing Home Supportive Care (NHSC) programme.



In 2022 and 2023, the GPFirst programme has benefited more than

8,000

patients who were referred by their GPs.



In 2023, more than

18,000

residents participated in mass activities organised by WH, which includes healthy weight management and Advance Care Planning.



A blood test being conducted at a community health screening.

84 services and facilities. Beyond the Campus, the 63-year-old also spreads the word about our community events and initiatives within her wide social circle.

Ms Kumari says she always had an interest in giving back. "I wanted to work in the healthcare sector as a nurse; it's a passion that I didn't realise in my early years," she adds. "I still want to learn as much as I can and am eager to give back to the community by looking out for the seniors, my neighbours and the people around the neighbourhood."

Dr Wong shares this commitment to community health. In moving the population's mindsets and attitudes towards better health, he acknowledges that there are no shortcuts. Patience and a longer-term investment in community work are required because real change often takes time.

For our teams sowing the seeds of change, every step brings them closer to our vision of a community that will live and age well in place.



A Bright Vision OF HEALTHCARE

Our clinical team saw the need for significant changes to manage the population health in the North-Western region. The vision? An innovative and sustainable healthcare ecosystem integrated into the daily lives of the community.



CHAPTER 08

BEYOND THE CAMPUS

Accessing lifelines of care

IN HEALTHCARE, the journey of a patient often does not begin or end at the hospital's doors. Effective pre-hospital and integrated and continuing care initiatives are crucial in creating a seamless continuum of care. Singapore's healthcare system currently faces challenges with the rising influx of emergency department visits and acute hospital bed shortages, signalling a need for an overhaul. While exploring viable solutions, a question our

clinical team kept in mind was how Woodlands Health (WH) could function as "a hospital without walls", where patients are well-supported in the community when they're unwell and after they leave the hospital. Bringing together teams with expertise in pre-hospital triage and integrated and continuing care support systems, we developed a road map that ensures patients receive the right treatment at the right time and place.

PART 1

NAVIGATING THE PRE-HOSPITAL CARE JOURNEY

90 **WHEN AN UNEXPECTED** medical issue occurs, the first instinct for some people might be to call 995 or dash to the emergency department. But what if there are better ways to get the right care in the right place, without necessarily involving a trip to the emergency department?

Despite repeated reminders from hospitals and public education campaigns emphasising that the emergency department should not be used for non-urgent ailments, these departments continue to see an increase in activity each year. Singapore has experienced a yearly increase in demand for emergency services – both pre-hospital emergency medical services and emergency departments – ranging from 3 to 10 per cent annually.

This pace outstrips the healthcare system's capacity to adapt, says Dr Mohan Tiru, Divisional Chairperson, Division of Pre-Hospital & Diagnostic Services and Division of Surgery. The growth has led to ongoing issues with hospital bed shortages and overcrowding.¹

¹ <https://www.duke-nus.edu.sg/perc>

Opposite page: At Woodlands Health, a traffic light analogy guides the public to the appropriate care site based on condition severity; Dr Mohan Tiru speaking at a GPFirst engagement in 2018; residents are encouraged to visit General Practitioners who can better manage their conditions in the community.



**GO TO
EMERGENCY
DEPARTMENT (ED)**



**GO TO
URGENT CARE CENTRE
(UCC @ ADMIRALTY)**



**GO TO
GENERAL
PRACTITIONER (GP)**

Dr Mohan isn't one to mince his words about the challenges. "This baggage will stay with us unless we do something about it," he shares. "Increasing the capacity alone, in terms of the number of beds in the hospitals, isn't the solution. We'd have to decrease the demand as well." Without taking steps to manage both supply and demand, the healthcare system will continue to remain under strain, constantly struggling to keep up.

IT STARTS IN THE COMMUNITY

Led by Dr Mohan, the Transforming Acute Care Ecosystem Workgroup aimed to find viable solutions. Dr Mohan, who is also a Senior Consultant in Emergency Medicine, knew there was much work to be done on the ground even before our Campus started operating. "One of the things we set out to do was to learn from our previous experiences working in acute settings in other hospitals," he says.

Bringing together a team with expertise in emergency care services, the Workgroup kicked off several pre-hospital initiatives in the North-Western region. Their

goal was to help unwell residents get the right care in the right place. Think of these efforts as a first line of defence for guiding individuals feeling sick to the appropriate care setting before heading to the hospital.

Working with family doctors

One of our first steps was to engage General Practitioners (GPs) in the North-Western region through the GPFirst programme. A public-private healthcare partnership, this programme encourages residents to see their family doctor for non-emergency issues such as common illnesses and fractures.

"We began even before the hospital started, so that people could get sensitised that GPs can manage many conditions with some extra training and support from our Emergency Medicine colleagues," Dr Mohan explains.

GPs in the private sector see around 80 per cent of patients requiring primary care, or basic health services. But, for more serious needs that require hospital-based care, such as surgery, only 20 per cent are handled in the private sector, with the remaining 80 per cent going to public hospitals.





We wanted to provide support and a lower-cost setting for patients with semi-urgent, non-emergency conditions that require more than a GP can provide, such as laboratory investigations.

Dr Mohan Tiru, Divisional Chairperson, Division of Pre-Hospital & Diagnostic Services and Division of Surgery, Woodlands Health, on bringing hospital-level services to residents

Enhancing primary care services can reduce the number of less urgent visits to the emergency department, helping patients avoid unnecessary hospital visits and overloading resources.

With the GPFirst programme at WH, our team helps family doctors learn how to care for more complex but non-emergency health issues right in their clinics.

For instance, GPs are trained to recognise serious symptoms in patients with dengue fever and know when to send them to the Urgent Care Centre or Emergency Department. They can also work temporarily or part-time at the Urgent Care Centre at Admiralty (UCC @ Admiralty) to train and refresh their skills in doing minor procedures.

Since starting, we have worked with all 139 GPs in the North-Western region, covering areas such as Woodlands, Admiralty, Sembawang and Yishun.

Bridging emergency and primary care

Following the GPFirst programme's success, the Transforming Acute Care Ecosystem Workgroup aimed to further reduce non-critical visits to the Emergency Department. Patients with minor emergencies and non-emergency issues, known as Priority 3 and 4, were targeted. With support from the Ministry of Health, UCC @ Admiralty was established in September 2020. As a complement to the GPFirst programme, it is the first community-based urgent care facility in Singapore located outside an acute hospital, with laboratory and X-ray services.

Our team travelled to similar centres in the United Kingdom and the United States, gathering insights on the best practices and devising ideas to implement such care models in Singapore. The idea was to bring hospital-level services to residents' doorsteps. "We wanted to provide support and a lower-cost setting for patients with semi-urgent, non-emergency conditions that require more than a GP can provide, such as radiological or laboratory investigations," Dr Mohan explains.

The UCC serves patients in stable condition with issues like dengue fever or fractures. Since its opening in September 2020 until May 2024, UCC @ Admiralty has seen more than 51,000 patients, with fewer than 10 per cent needing referral to the Emergency Department.

To further guide residents on where to get appropriate treatment, we developed the NurseFirst programme, a phone-based triage public helpline that was launched in November 2021. Nurses trained in emergency triage offer advice on the most suitable care option – whether it's a family doctor, the UCC or the Emergency Department – based on the caller's symptoms.

Spreading the word on the ground

In the early days, our pre-hospital team faced several obstacles: how do we effectively inform residents about the various programmes available to them?

Dr Mohan recalls the "snail pace" of growth in the UCC @ Admiralty's first year. They saw just 20 to 30 patients a day, well below the target patient load of around 80.

To kick-start momentum, the team got creative and reached out to grassroots leaders and Grassroots Advisers in the North-Western region. They also tapped on social media, which played a pivotal role in getting the word out, and making sure residents knew where to turn when they were unwell.

Clockwise from below:
A nurse attending to a patient at the Urgent Care Centre; the Emergency Department at Woodlands Health; the NurseFirst helpline in operation.



INNOVATING CARE PATHS BEYOND HOSPITAL ADMISSION

The Transforming Acute Care Ecosystem Workgroup has redesigned the healthcare environment by developing alternative pathways to care for patients visiting the Emergency Department. These innovations not only provide more efficient care but also lessen the dependence on inpatient admissions.

One of these alternatives is the **Emergency Department Acute Surgery** route. Patients needing straightforward surgical procedures, such as for acute appendicitis, can be referred here directly, bypassing the traditional inpatient stay.

Our **Extended Diagnostic Treatment Unit** offers another pathway. Patients undergo detailed observation and diagnostic testing without being admitted to a ward. Based on the outcomes, they might either be discharged or moved to inpatient wards for further treatment.

Then, there is the **Outpatient Parenteral Antibiotic Therapy Clinic**, which administers injectable, hospital-level antibiotic treatment for serious infections without an overnight hospital stay.

Our **Early Review / Hot Clinics** also cater to patients who, though at higher risk, are stable and can benefit from early specialist follow-up, typically within a week after being discharged from the Emergency Department. This reduces the need for immediate inpatient care.



This approach paid off and led to encouraging feedback from the community regarding their UCC experiences. “Keeping the public informed and engaged is a key factor for pre-hospital initiatives to be sustainable,” says Dr Mohan.

Cultivating strong ties with GPs in the area is also crucial, as they can direct patients to the UCC when deemed necessary. “I think many of these initiatives helped,” Dr Mohan adds. “But, there’s also word of mouth – when members of the public receive urgent care at our centre and share positive feedback about their experiences, such as shorter waiting times and good care.”

While young, healthy people usually recover quickly after a hospital stay, seniors dealing with multiple health issues or lacking adequate support at home face a much tougher phase once they leave the hospital.

94 Dr Wong Kirk Chuan, Chief Operating Officer, emphasises this challenge. “As important as pre-hospital care is, so is integrated and continuing care – so that people don’t fall off the cliff,” he says. “For example, if you’re going home after being discharged from the hospital, how am I going to assist you at home? How do I send the right people to come in and help you? Is there even that kind of environment for people to help you? Many of these community initiatives require a concerted effort.”

“Many of these initiatives helped. But, there’s also word of mouth – when members of the public receive urgent care at our centre and share positive feedback about their experiences, such as shorter waiting times and good care.”

Dr Mohan Tiru, Divisional Chairperson, Division of Pre-Hospital & Diagnostic Services and Division of Surgery, Woodlands Health, on reaching out to residents about the various pre-hospital initiatives

DID YOU KNOW?

Our pre-operations wards were established well before the official opening of the Campus. The first of these, Ward D88, began serving patients at Yishun Community Hospital in October 2017. This 18-bedded ward was staffed by a dedicated care team of doctors, nurses and allied health professionals.

By March 2018, we expanded capacity with the opening of a second pre-operations ward, D77, at Yishun Community Hospital. Our network of pre-operations wards grew even larger by December 2019, with the addition of another two wards, D68 and D57, at Yishun Community Hospital, and two more, Wards 82 and 86, at Tan Tock Seng Hospital.

These pre-operations wards provided a unique opportunity for our clinical teams, which were stationed across different public healthcare institutions, to train together. This collaborative training environment allowed them to refine their workflows and enhance the level of patient care provided.



Clockwise from above: Colleagues at our pre-operations wards at Yishun Community Hospital Wards D88, D77, D68 and D57, and Tan Tock Seng Hospital Wards 82 and 86.



PART 2

THE INTEGRATED AND CONTINUING CARE JOURNEY

Since 2018, more than 100 patients have benefited from CONNACT Plus, an initiative led by Dr Bryan Tan, Consultant, Orthopaedic Surgery, Woodlands Health.



96 **RECOGNISING THE NEED** for continuous support, the clinical team focused on making the transition from hospital to home as smooth as possible. This effort is embodied in the work of the Division of Integrated & Continuing Care (DICC), which seeks to ensure that the care journey doesn't end at our exit doors.

Explaining this mission is Dr Wu Huei Yaw, Divisional Chairperson (DICC). "We aspire to be a hospital without walls," he says. "As far as possible, we hope to deliver care to the doorsteps of our patients through different programmes that cater to their specific needs."

FROM HOSPITAL TO HOME

Helping seniors and those with chronic conditions smoothly transition to their lives at home after an illness requires a comprehensive approach – it really does take a village. The DICC has placed several safety nets to protect vulnerable patients after leaving the hospital. Like the pre-hospital initiatives, it works closely with community partners to offer support that meets each patient's specific care needs.

From acute to sub-acute care

At WH, we are challenging the traditional care model by adopting innovative strategies. For example, in line with our vision of creating a unified "one" hospital environment, the Campus is designed to house both acute and community hospital wards under one roof.

This allows for a smooth transition of patients from the acute setting to the sub-acute or rehabilitative setting when their conditions stabilise. So, the specialist who cared for a patient in the acute ward can then cross over to review him or her in the community hospital ward if expert input is required during the patient's stay there.



Scan to watch!

DR WU HUEI YAW
On caring for
patients beyond
their acute episode

Continued care after discharge

The Hospital to Home (H2H) programme kicks into gear for patients who, although cleared to leave the hospital, still need extra support at home. At the forefront is a multidisciplinary team that includes doctors, nurses, therapists, dietitians and medical social workers and that works with community partners to deliver tailored care directly to patients at home.

Within our Communities of Care (CoC) are programmes that support the transition of patients back into the community. One such initiative is CONNACT Plus, which aims to rehabilitate patients with knee osteoarthritis and reduce unnecessary surgery. It offers physiotherapy, educational sessions on nutrition and health coaching to help patients set and achieve personal health goals.

The WH Fund, which was established in late 2023, offers financial aid to patients to facilitate a smooth discharge process. It covers costs for mobility aids,

hospital equipment, transport home and interim home care services such as nursing, personal care and meal delivery. "Sometimes, patients go back to a home that isn't ready for them," says Ms Chow Siew Ying, Chief Financial Officer. "So, these funds allow them to make small modifications, such as installing handrails or converting to sitting toilets. These adjustments can mean so much to them, things that many of us take for granted."

By funding pilot programmes and interventions, we aim to explore new models of care that, if successful, can be scaled up to benefit a larger population.

Supporting the final journey

The needs of patients nearing the end of life haven't been overlooked either. Our Inpatient Hospice and Palliative Care service helps ensure they can "leave well". For those preferring to spend their final days at home, we work closely with home palliative care providers, offering comfort and dignity during life's final phase.



FORMING A CIRCLE OF CARE

After being diagnosed with advanced lung cancer, the terminally ill man was referred to our Hospital to Home team for support upon his discharge. During a home visit, Dr Wu Huei Yaw met the patient, who expressed a firm wish to spend his final days at home, amid familiar surroundings, rather than in a hospital.

“The care needs of a terminally ill patient are usually very high towards the end of life. Often, we may ask the patient to be admitted to the hospital or inpatient hospice if the family is unable to cope with the care,” Dr Wu explains. “However, this gentleman was very clear. His wish was to remain at home in his last days, and we wanted to honour his wish. In the end, we had to hand over his care to a community hospice provider as we’re not a 24/7 service.”

Helping this patient required partnering with a home palliative care provider to get the right equipment, such as an oxygen concentrator, to ease the man’s breathing difficulties. Dr Wu notes the importance of collaboration in extending care beyond the hospital walls. Caring for patients well in the community setting is a tough task to undertake alone. “We need to work closely with our community partners to ensure that we can provide and deliver good quality care,” he says.

Integrated and continuing care involves working with community partners to provide the appropriate support and guidance needed by patients.

BY THE NUMBERS



1,000

The number of beds in the acute and community hospital wards housed side by side for seamless care when the Woodlands Health Campus fully opens. The number can be ramped up to 1,800 beds in the future.



1,100+

The number of patients supported by the Hospital-to-Home team in 2022.



51,600+

The total number of patients receiving care at the Urgent Care Centre @ Admiralty from the opening in September 2020 till 22 April 2024. Fewer than 10 per cent of these patients were referred to the Emergency Department.



11,500+

The total number of calls screened by the NurseFirst helpline from its inception in February 2022 until April 2024.



NEARLY TWO-THIRDS (64%)

The proportion of callers in 2023 intending to visit the Emergency Department who were redirected to non-emergency sites instead.

The Urgent Care Centre @ Admiralty treats patients with urgent but not life-threatening conditions.





A place to call "Home" after years of nesting at various institutions.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN EVERYONE IN the Woodlands Health Family works together as one? We become a formidable force. Our indomitable spirit was clearly evident during the pandemic when colleagues, who were nested across public healthcare institutions, rallied together to help set up the Community Care Facilities and care for patients. That can-do spirit, sense of unity and lessons learnt from the COVID-19 experience proved crucial when our clinical and operations teams prepared the Campus for the opening on 22 December 2023. Behind the scenes, teams worked together to set up our spaces, systems and processes, and prepare colleagues for the big day.



CHAPTER 09

EMERGING STRONGER

Lessons learnt from the COVID-19 pandemic

DECKED OUT IN full personal protective equipment, our team of Woodlands Health (WH) nurses was in high spirits and raring to go. That day in April 2020 marked their very first shift at the Community Isolation Facility at Pasir Ris D'Resort, tending to patients infected by the then-novel coronavirus. Not much was known about the virus at that point, save for its highly contagious nature and potential severity.

Fast forward to today, and the COVID-19 pandemic might seem like a distant memory to some. But it

remains fresh in the minds of many of our colleagues who were deep in the trenches at the frontlines.

Chief Operating Officer Dr Wong Kirk Chuan recalls the sight of the nurses stepping across the threshold into the isolation area, gowned up from head to toe in protective gear. "I still remember that first shift of nurses going in to care for that first batch of patients," he recounts. "They went in looking cheerful and jovial. But thinking about it now, it was quite scary for everyone. We were so very proud of them."



Opposite page and this page:
Our team at CIF@D'Resort;
setting up and testing the
facilities at CCF@EXPO.



Scan to watch!

PROFESSOR KENNETH MAK
On Woodlands Health being tasked with setting up and running CCF@EXPO and CTF@Tampines

“ I still remember that first shift of nurses going in to care for that first batch of patients. They went in looking cheerful and jovial. But thinking about it now, it was quite scary for everyone. We were so very proud of them. ”

Dr Wong Kirk Chuan, Chief Operating Officer, Woodlands Health, on seeing nurses take their first shift at the Community Isolation Facility at Pasir Ris D'Resort in April 2020

A BOLD UNDERTAKING

The brave response from our colleagues during the uncertainties of the COVID-19 pandemic remains a significant memory.

Tasked by the Ministry of Health (MOH) to establish one of the first Community Care Facilities (CCFs), initially known as Community Isolation Facilities, at Pasir Ris D'Resort, WH played a crucial role in supporting the national COVID-19 response. Later, our teams also joined the multi-agency effort as the medical lead to set up the first large-scale CCF at Singapore EXPO, which received its first patient on 10 April 2020.

The urgency to get CCF@EXPO operational quickly within days – to ease the pressure on acute hospitals from a surge in cases originating from the foreign workers' dormitories – was palpable.

A taskforce was quickly assembled, comprising representatives from PSA International, Surbana Jurong, SingEx, Certis, Resorts World Sentosa, MOH and WH. Their single purpose was to prepare CCF@EXPO in the record-breaking time of just five days. Our doctors, nurses, allied health professionals, and laboratory and pharmacy teams, who were then nested across various Public Healthcare Institutions, rallied for this effort.

Our teams had their work cut out for them, from procuring medical supplies amid global supply chain disruptions and rostering medical personnel, to creating efficient workflows and conducting briefings on infection control protocols.

Non-clinical staff also lent a hand, smoothing out operations by providing logistical and administrative support and setting up new halls when necessary. At its height, CCF@EXPO accommodated more than 8,000 patients – marking an operational scale unlike any we had encountered before.



Dr Mohan Tiru in a meeting discussing operations at CCF@EXPO.



Team taking a picture before leaving CCF@EXPO.



Nurses preparing to attend to the patients at the CTF.



Team receiving the first patient at the COVID-19 Treatment Facility at NTUC Health Nursing Home (Tampines).

A GLIMPSE OF WOODLANDS HEALTH IN ACTION

Facing the behemoth task of coordinating care during the pandemic offered a glimpse into the culture – and future – of our WH Family in action. Together, we proved to be a force to be reckoned with.

This experience highlighted our ability to think outside the box when tested with almost insurmountable challenges. “COVID-19 taught us many valuable lessons,” notes Dr Mohan Tiru, Divisional Chairperson, Division of Pre-Hospital & Diagnostic Services and Division of Surgery.

It showed how our limitations often exist mentally and that by thinking creatively, what seems impossible can be accomplished.

For instance, in finding effective and safe ways to care for patients within the infection control areas, our teams turned to tele-triage and teleconsultation, once thought difficult to achieve. Such practices continue to be widely used after the pandemic.

Dr Teresa Wong, Consultant, Department of Anaesthesia, recalls the collective effort and dedication during the peak of the COVID-19 response at CCF@EXPO. “Our leadership was with us every step of the way, our nursing sister-in-charge was tireless, and our operations manager might as well have taken up residence at Singapore EXPO,” she says.

“Everyone was wary of getting COVID-19, but that did not prevent us from being with our patients and going the extra mile to care not just for their physical wellbeing but also their mental wellbeing. There’s something inherently uplifting about being part of a group that works relentlessly towards a common goal.”

The emotions are similar for Chief Executive Officer Dr Jason Cheah. A sense of pride envelops him whenever he thinks back on the incredible teamwork and steadfastness. “It made me very proud and happy to see all of our various teams coming together to work for a common cause,” he says.

“Setting up CCF@EXPO was WH’s first major test in terms of coming together to create and make something happen. The fact that we pulled it off proved that we could do something together that was meaningful to the public and make an important contribution to the country. It put us in a better state of mind to prepare for our new hospital.”

During this challenging period, senior management checked in on the WH Family frequently and regularly. It was their way of rallying and connecting with colleagues in a time of uncertainty. A weekly message from Dr Cheah and Dr Nicholas Chew, Chairman, Medical Board, provided regular updates on the latest situation and how WH was contributing to the pandemic efforts.

The senior leaders also held several on-ground engagement sessions and a virtual Townhall meeting to address questions and concerns from colleagues.

As the pandemic situation began to stabilise, the operations at CCF@EXPO were gradually scaled down.

WH maintained a presence there until the last patient was discharged on 5 December 2020.

In May 2021, in response to the surge in cases due to the highly contagious Delta variant, WH began operating the 1,500-bedded CCF @ Ang Mo Kio, which was set up originally in June 2020 as a buffer for contingencies should there be a need to increase CCF capacity.

Later that year, WH was tasked with setting up the first COVID-19 Treatment Facility (CTF) at NTUC Health Nursing Home (Tampines), which received its first patient on 23 September 2021.

The facility, which had 250 beds, was for COVID-19 patients who were generally well but had underlying medical conditions that required close monitoring. Around 2,600 patients were treated at the CTF@ Tampines over six-and-a-half months, with the final patient discharged on 5 April 2022.

SECURING SUPPLIES DURING A PANDEMIC

Obtaining medical supplies and equipment during the COVID-19 pandemic was a huge challenge for our team at CCF@EXPO due to global supply disruptions and local restrictions. We were especially grateful to partners and sister institutions that readily contributed vital resources, including stationery and excess supplies, without hesitation.

Ms Pua Lay Hoon, Chief Nurse, and **Mr Tan Lai Hong**, Deputy Director, Nursing Administration, made use of their connections at polytechnics for essential equipment such as wheelchairs. **Ms Yong Pei Chean**, Chief, Pharmacy, quickly organised medications and storage with her team. Similarly, resources were strategically reallocated from the soon-to-open Urgent Care Centre @ Admiralty.

Under the leadership of **Ms Ng Choo Choo**, Deputy Director, ALPS, our Procurement or Material Management team adopted creative strategies to acquire necessary medical equipment and supplies. Facing global shortages and high prices, they explored leasing options with vendors to secure essential items such as personal protective equipment without the immediate financial burden of outright purchases. The urgent mission allowed for some flexibility in administrative processes, with documentation often completed post-acquisition. Team members also personally ensured the delivery of supplies across the island to meet critical needs promptly.

In a notable incident, when **Dr Wong Kirk Chuan**, Chief Operating Officer, needed fabric face masks for patients, **Ms Ng** sourced for thousands online and from markets across the island – after recalling a tip from her mother about masks available at their local market.

Nursing team at CCF@EXPO.



Then NHG Group CEO Professor Philip Choo (in white) in a discussion with the WH team at CCF@EXPO.



The nursing team gowning up at CCF@EXPO.

“The fact that we pulled it off proved that we could do something together that was meaningful to the public and make an important contribution to the country. It put us in a better state of mind to prepare for our new hospital.”

Dr Jason Cheah, Chief Executive Officer, Woodlands Health, on how the set-up of CCF@EXPO was our first major test in coming together to create and make something happen

Introducing the 3S' !

When you **See** something amiss, **Say** it, so we can **Solve** it together! Let's build a transparent and open culture of safety and quality improvement together by practising the 3S'.



A practice of keen and constant observation

A culture of open reporting and communication

A habit of accountability, taking ownership and problem solving

Our "3S" motto:
See it, Say it, Solve it.

SHAPING THE FUTURE WITH LESSONS LEARNT

The COVID-19 experience taught the management team the value of transparency, communication and open discussions, which proved to be pivotal in overcoming challenges. Regular team huddles became a crucial avenue for openly sharing and addressing varying concerns and viewpoints.

Mr Muhammad Faiz Bin Abdul Rahmat Mordiffi, Senior Nurse Manager, General Medicine, values our open and transparent work environment – a key factor in his eight-year tenure at WH. Emphasising the ease of communication among colleagues, he states there is a "no wrong door policy", which has enabled more efficient collaboration in solving issues. "We're able to engage people from various departments to clarify and resolve issues," he shares. "This open line of communication prevents people from jumping to premature conclusions or assumptions. It also allows us to understand each other's perspective, ensuring information is not diluted."

The Value & Safety Office (VSO) at WH also further encourages this culture of cooperation. Named by Dr Chew, VSO collaborates with different departments to investigate and resolve clinical-related incidents

or complaints through the proactive "3S" motto, "See it, Say it, Solve it." This approach encourages staff to practise keen observation, communicate openly and foster a culture of accountability while taking ownership of issues. Colleagues are constantly reminded about the 3S through on-ground engagements, campaigns and awards for those who've made a "good catch". In essence, VSO is the go-to place for identifying and resolving issues, with patient safety and healthcare quality enhancement at its core.

The pandemic also yielded valuable insights into isolation methods for future pandemic planning. Drawing from the experience, our management team realised that the provisioning for airborne infections on Campus might not have been aggressive enough.

With a deeper understanding of how the SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus spreads, the planning team collaborated with project architects to reconfigure one of the hospital's Towers to be swiftly converted into an airborne isolation facility when needed. "One of the key improvements was enhancing how we manage 'hot' patients," shares Mr Tan Nam Ann, Director, Operations Support Group. "How and where do we hold them? How do we make sure that

the space is properly shielded and can contain airborne viruses? So, we needed to make some changes."

A comprehensive review of all public zones, staff areas and patient care facilities at the new Campus focused on circulation, airflow and ventilation, materials, finishes, and other key aspects. Additionally, pandemic preparedness plans were revisited with input from the Infection Prevention and Control team.

Amid the COVID-19 whirlwind, Dr Wong gained newfound clarity about WH's forward-thinking approach. Reflecting on the resilience and commitment to a common goal, he saw it as a breakthrough. "Looking back, I realised our team is well-placed for a good culture," he muses. "It felt like a milestone epiphany. Every key leader in the team is very forward-looking and driven by a good heart. It's a gung-ho team – I like it."

Should the need arise, WH will be well-equipped to tackle another challenge with the same resolve.

Dr Nicholas Chew (front, left) and Ms Pua Lay Hoon (front, centre) together with the team at CCF@EXPO.



LOOKING BACK ON THE COVID-19 EXPERIENCE: REFLECTIONS FROM OUR COLLEAGUES

"Things will get better every day – that was how I saw the COVID-19 situation. It was tough, particularly when there was no relief, not a single day off. In everything I did, I had an end goal in mind, which was to ensure that COVID-19 did not harm any of my staff, not just in nursing, but everybody. The second aim was to minimise damage for those who were infected. Keeping that end goal in mind gave me focus."

Ms Pua Lay Hoon, Chief Nurse, on what kept her going during the COVID-19 period

"We never doubted that the facility could be completed in five days – whatever was needed, happened."

Dr Nicholas Chew, Chairman, Medical Board, on the rapid set-up of CCF@EXPO; two halls were converted and ready to house patients within five days

"The People & Organisation Development team helped us accomplish a lot in the limited time we were given. Together, we worked 12 hours daily for two consecutive weeks. In the trying process, we got to know many people who were very helpful to us. Being able to contribute together made me feel proud to be part of WH."

Ms Jessica Wong, Physiotherapist, reflecting on the support from non-clinical staff two weeks after CCF@EXPO opened

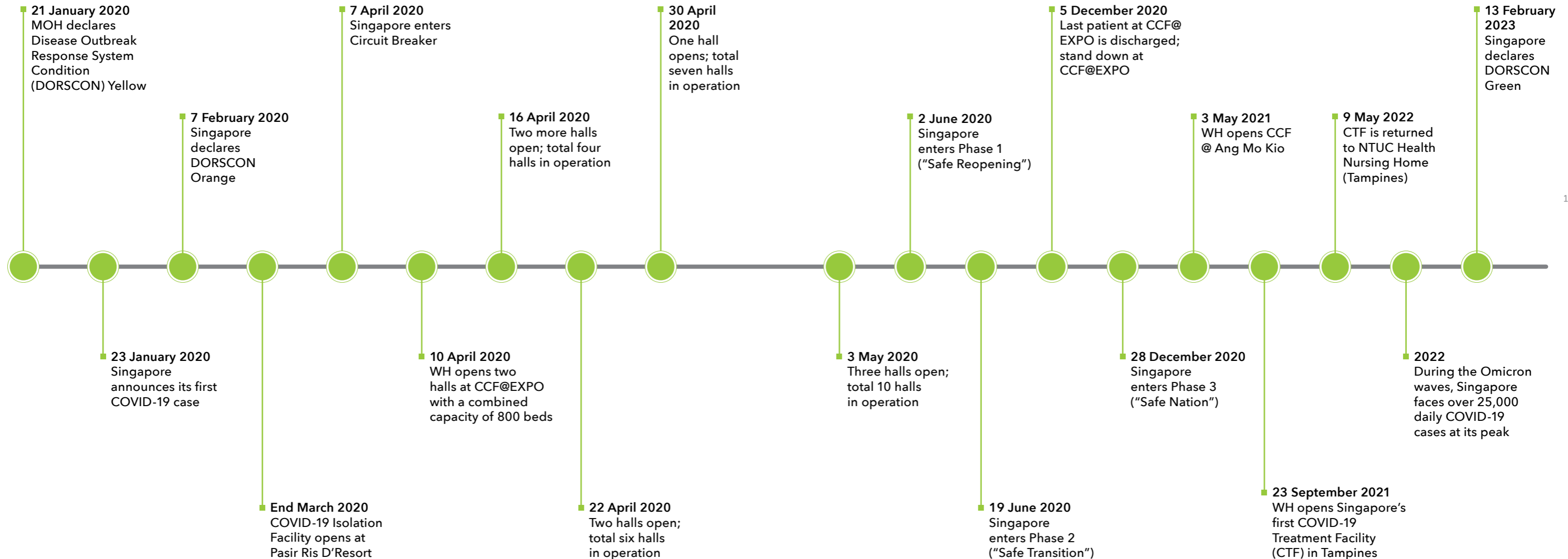


Scan to watch!

PROFESSOR KENNETH MAK
On the lessons learnt from COVID-19

UPDATING THE RULES FOR FIGHTING A NEW VIRUS

Since there was little known about the coronavirus at first, our teams had to quickly adjust to new information as it came in. Dr Nicholas Chew, Chairman, Medical Board, stayed in close touch with the Ministry of Health (MOH) to get the latest medical updates and guidelines. Regular talks and daily huddles with on-ground staff and partners were key to keeping everyone informed about any new rule changes, such as when patients could be discharged.





Calm AFTER
THE STORM

Tasked with setting up care facilities during the COVID-19 pandemic, our Woodlands Health colleagues, who were nested at various hospitals, united for the first time. The team showed our ability to work together and think creatively in the face of daunting challenges.



CHAPTER 10

COMING BACK HOME

Gearing up for opening

ON A SUNNY February morning, the final steel beam found its place atop Tower B, completing a pivotal chapter in the construction of Woodlands Health's (WH) acute and community hospital. This momentous event on 12 February 2022 started the countdown to the opening of our Campus later in December 2023.

From across various public healthcare institutions, our clinical and operational teams united towards a common goal. They brought their distinct expertise and skills together, preparing the Campus for its debut. At the helm, our Go-Live Steering Committee diligently oversaw every detail – from logistics to training – to ensure a smooth and timely launch.

PART 1

THE HARDWARE:

Readying our spaces, systems and processes

SAFETY FIRST: REVVING UP KEY OPERATIONS

As the big day approached, our Campus Planning and Operations Support Group teams buckled down with a singular focus on Campus readiness and ensuring that security measures were in place. Overseeing various facets of preparations, including the readiness of spaces, security, facilities, logistics and office administration, their priority was crystal clear: safety first.

With only two months from receiving the Temporary Occupation Permit in mid-October to the opening on 22 December 2023, the teams faced a sprint against time. During the early set-up phase, they orchestrated access to the Campus – still bustling with construction activities – for colleagues to prepare the wards and clinics. They did this all while managing safety risks and enforcing strict safety protocols, such as ensuring that everyone who accessed the worksite was appropriately attired for safety.

Amid the bustle, a heartwarming episode unfolded, as Mr Tan Nam Ann, Director, Operations Support Group, remembers fondly. Without prompting, the administrative team decided to wash the safety vests worn by colleagues. Mr Tan saw it as a proactive gesture showing the deep dedication and can-do spirit of the WH Family. "I think many of us at WH have this understanding that we're going to get work done first when we see a need for it and count beans later on," he remarks.



Scan to watch!

MR TAN NAM ANN

On preparing the spaces for administrative colleagues



A colleague from the Integrated Command Centre monitors infrastructure health and checks in with relevant teams on campus faults.



Regular fire safety briefings and drills helped our departments familiarise themselves with escape routes and assembly areas.



The Facilities Management team doing testing and commissioning in the wards and Operating Theatres, adhering to strict safety protocols due to ongoing construction.

As part of their work, the Operations Support Group also oversees the outsourcing of vendors such as housekeeping, security and porters. Working in tandem with the People & Organisation Development and the Human Resource teams, they ensure that even the vendors embody our culture. "In our vendor selection and appointment process, one of our requirements is their ability to gel with the WH culture," Mr Tan notes. "To support this, we ensure that our service partners attend the same WH programmes as our colleagues."

“In our vendor selection process, one requirement is their ability to gel with the WH culture. To support this, we ensure that our service partners attend the same WH programmes as our colleagues.”

Mr Tan Nam Ann, Director, Operations Support Group, Woodlands Health, on vendors embodying our culture

SETTING UP SPACES AND SYSTEMS

The set-up of clinical spaces and operational systems across our Campus was a unique venture filled with challenges and unforgettable moments for all involved.

Take, for example, the Radiology Information Systems and Operations teams, which began setting up progressively in the second quarter of 2023. Donning personal protective equipment and safety gear provided by the Operations Support Group, they made their way through the construction site and into the temporary site office for daily tasks.

Despite the lack of regular facilities at the time, they managed the back-to-back deliveries of equipment, inspecting each item for defects and organising the workflow of modalities and individual workstations.

“We frequently scoured the entire department, scrutinising every nook and cranny for defects to such a degree that it might send a professional BTO (Build-To-Order) home inspector into an existential crisis,” quips Mr Hashwin Singh, Senior Radiographer. “Perhaps a value-added skill worthy of incorporating into our CVs!”



The Radiology team setting up a mobile X-ray machine in the Intensive Care Unit.



The Outpatient Rehabilitation Gym at Level 1 of the Medical Centre, where patients who have musculoskeletal conditions or chronic diseases, or are recovering from surgery regain their independence and strength through activities.

“Whether it was the collective enthusiasm when we went as a department to collect our new uniforms, or the exhilaration of walking through the newly opened MRT exit to the Campus on the first day in December 2023, it was a time of excitement!”

Ms R Keeshmita, Radiographer, Woodlands Health, on the camaraderie at the December opening

As the date of the December opening loomed, the atmosphere buzzed with activity: configuring machines, testing workflows and gearing up for audits. The journey was peppered with small wins and fun moments of camaraderie, which added a spark of joy to their tasks. “Whether it was the collective enthusiasm when we all went as a department to collect our new WH uniforms, or the exhilaration of walking through the newly opened MRT exit to the Campus on the first day in December 2023, it was truly a time of camaraderie and excitement!” recalls Ms R Keeshmita, Radiographer.

Meanwhile, colleagues from the Rehabilitation Department focused on designing spaces that prioritise patient accessibility and interdisciplinary collaboration. Their goal was to seamlessly integrate a variety of rehabilitation services within the Campus environment.

Opposite page: The garden integrated with Ren Ci @ Woodlands at the Long Term Care Tower encourages a healing experience for the seniors residing there.



Seeing the gyms come together was really fulfilling, especially knowing how much it will help our patients regain their independence and strength.

Mr Nicholas Cheng, Executive, Rehabilitation Department, Woodlands Health

A prime example is the centralised Outpatient Rehabilitation Gym, strategically located on Level 1 of the Medical Centre. Here, patients who are dealing with musculoskeletal conditions or chronic diseases, or recovering from surgery can access care with ease. This central hub also facilitates collaboration among physiotherapists, occupational therapists and speech therapists – fostering teamwork, sharing resources and ultimately, enhancing patient care.

Reflecting on the rewarding experience of setting up the rehabilitation gyms, Mr Nicholas Cheng, Executive, Rehabilitation Department, says that every decision made, from planning the layout to selecting the right equipment, was aimed at helping patients recover more quickly and comfortably. “Seeing the gyms come together was really fulfilling,” he shares, “especially

knowing how much it will help our patients regain their independence and strength.”

To facilitate seamless transitions across various care settings, Ren Ci @ Woodlands was among the spaces that opened its doors within the Campus in early 2024. Situated in the Long Term Care Tower, it comprises a 332-bedded Nursing Home, a Senior Care Centre for 100 clients, and Home Care services.

Designed with thoughtful features, Ren Ci @ Woodlands embraces a household concept. Four-bedded rooms are arranged around communal spaces, such as living areas with TV sets and kitchenettes, plus activity zones where a sense of community thrives. Natural ventilation enhances the feeling of comfort, making it truly feel like home.





The Go-Live Licensing Taskforce Chairperson, Dr Jeremiah Chng (far right), and the Secretariat Team for the WH Full Opening Licensing.



Dr Chng at an Auditor Team Formation Session.

IMPLEMENTING THE 'BIG 3 IT SYSTEMS'

In a pioneering move, WH became the first public hospital to launch with the integrated three major national IT systems¹, coined the "Big 3 IT systems": the Next Generation Electronic Medical Record (NGEMR), the National Billing System (NBS) and the National Harmonised Integrated Pharmacy System (NHIPS).

The dedicated teams tasked with harmonising and adapting workflows around these systems certainly had their hands full. These three platforms consolidated capabilities that enhance patient management, accounting, billing and pharmacy services. This integration aims to smoothen the patient experience as they transition through various healthcare settings.

Dr Navin Kuthiah, the Physician Training Lead for NGEMR at WH, stresses the crucial role of such IT systems as the healthcare landscape evolves. "You can't separate healthcare from IT now," he asserts. "Worldwide, including in Singapore, IT plays a huge role in healthcare – and that importance will only grow in the future."

Mastery of the NGEMR's tools, he notes, is essential for healthcare providers to deliver top-notch care. This advanced centralised system brings together electronic medical records across the National Healthcare Group and the National University Health System, paving the way for more integrated care.

WH is the first public hospital to launch with the Big 3 IT systems. An exhibition was held at our Townhall on 19 December 2023 for our colleagues to find out more about the respective systems.

¹ https://www.wh.com.sg/AboutUs/newsroom/Documents/WH%20Progressive%20Opening%20Media%20Release_22%20Dec%202023.pdf

NAVIGATING THE REGULATORY WATERS

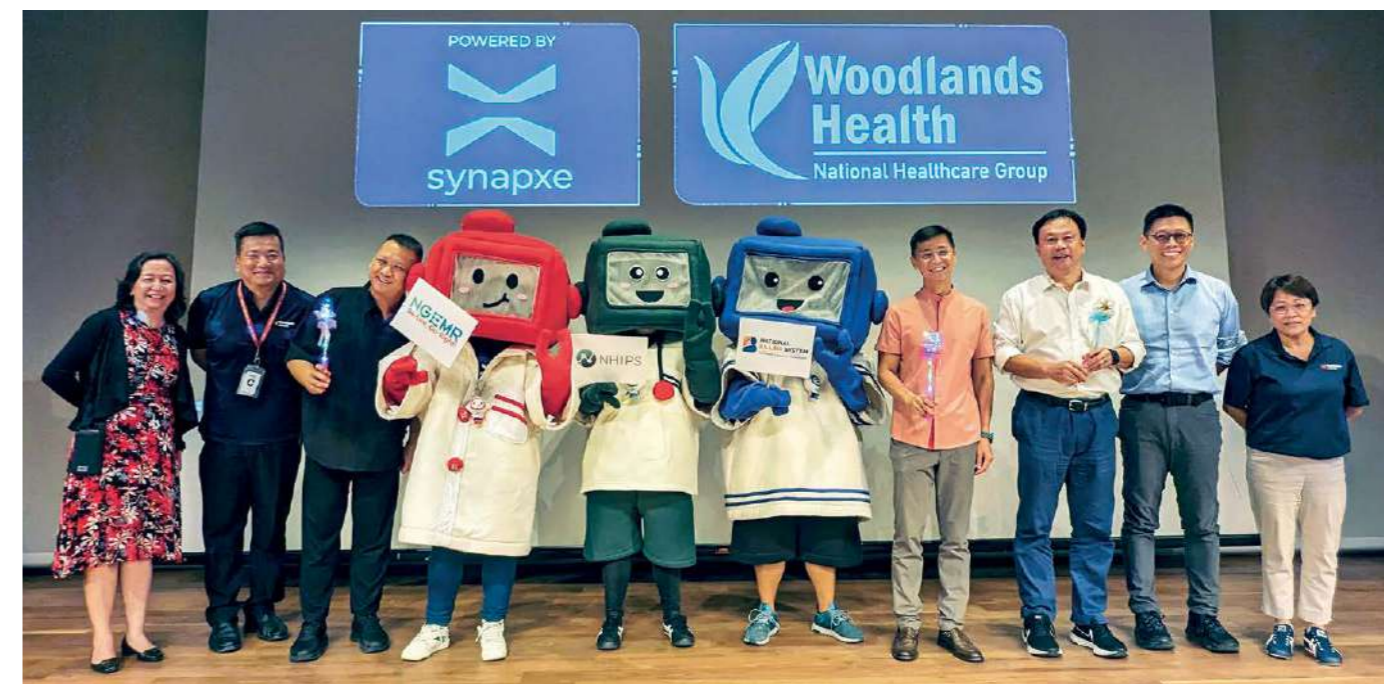
Behind the frenetic preparations of various departments to get our Campus ready to receive patients, our Go-Live Licensing Taskforce played a vital role in ensuring that the hospital met the regulatory obligations from the Ministry of Health (MOH) and was issued the operating licences on time. Led by Dr Jeremiah Chng, Head, Preventive Health & Occupational Medicine, the Taskforce was supported by Clinical Services, the Value & Safety Office, and internal auditors from all departments.

One unique challenge was that we were the first hospital to undergo MOH licensing entirely under the new Healthcare Services Act (HCSA), which had replaced the Private Hospitals and Medical Clinics Act (PHMCA) in phases starting from 2020. HCSA expanded the scope of healthcare services that MOH regulated, and now licensed healthcare providers based on the services they provided instead of their physical premises. This meant that we had to prepare for nine different

licences under HCSA instead of the traditional one licence under PHMCA.

With this complete change of the playbook, the main challenge the Licensing Taskforce faced was not just preparing for inspection. It had to first understand the new regulatory requirements, contextualise them to WH's environment, and then work with departments to implement these changes across the hospital. This was a big challenge because the HCSA regulations were released in phases, with the largest phase coming just six months before the Campus' December 2023 opening.

Despite these challenges, the Licensing Taskforce successfully supported the MOH inspections for the Campus' December 2023 and May 2024 openings. It was a momentous milestone for WH to successfully obtain our first licences, and it was only possible because of the strong dedication and team spirit within the WH Family.





The team went through multiple training sessions and rehearsals to master the new systems.

“There was so much uncertainty. We had to replan a lot because our timelines kept shifting. For example, training for the Next Generation Electronic Medical Record (NGEMR) couldn’t be done too early ahead of our opening. But when COVID-19 happened, we had to rework our training timelines. This affected not just us, but also our colleagues nested in other hospitals.”

Dr Navin Kuthiah, Physician Training Lead for NGEMR at Woodlands Health, on preparing colleagues to adapt to the new systems despite the hurdles of the COVID-19 pandemic, which disrupted well-laid plans



Thanks to the hospital management’s trust and the IT team’s unwavering dedication, we efficiently redeployed resources to support community facilities during the pandemic. Witnessing this adaptability during this crisis was humbling. Now, seeing the successful operation of IT systems in the new Campus is truly once-in-a-lifetime.”

Mr Robert Chew, Member, Woodlands Health Development Board Committee, who led the IT Workgroup and oversaw the planning and implementation of IT systems

Recalling the “complex process” that began years before the hospital even opened its doors, Dr Navin, who also serves as a Senior Consultant in Advanced Internal Medicine, discusses the multi-party collaboration required to implement the systems. This involved teams from the Office of Clinical Informatics, the national health-tech agency Synapxe (formerly known as Integrated Health Information Systems) and colleagues from other public healthcare facilities.

Preparing our colleagues to adapt to the new systems and procedures was no small feat. The COVID-19 pandemic introduced further hurdles, disrupting well-laid plans. Dr Navin likens the experience to trying to score with a moving goalpost.

“There was so much uncertainty. We had to replan a lot of things because our timelines kept shifting,” he elaborates. “For example, training for NGEMR couldn’t be done too early ahead of our opening. But when COVID-19 happened, we had to rework our training timelines.

This affected not just us, but also our colleagues nested in other hospitals.”

Witnessing the Big 3 IT systems whir to life at WH’s opening was a defining moment for everyone involved. “I felt proud, happy and contented, knowing all our hard work and planning paid off,” Dr Navin says, reflecting on the journey that brought us to this point.

The sentiment is shared by Mr Robert Chew, a member of the WH Development Board Committee leading the IT Workgroup, who oversaw the planning and implementation of the IT systems. Describing his journey as both challenging and rewarding, he says that the deployment and successful operation of IT systems on our Campus was “a truly once-in-a-lifetime experience”.

“This accomplishment wouldn’t have been possible without the exceptional talent, unwavering dedication and hard work of the Synapxe IT team, and the strong support of hospital management,” he adds.

PART 2

THE HEARTWARE: Nurturing our people

SETTING THE STAGE FOR TEAM UNITY

At WH, the journey towards team unity took an unconventional path. Unlike other new hospitals, our approach to manpower development was based on a nesting model, where colleagues were embedded across the National Healthcare Group and other public hospitals until the Campus was ready.

This unique strategy set the stage for our leadership team to tackle the immense challenge of cultivating a cohesive team identity. The COVID-19 pandemic only intensified these challenges, as limited face-to-face interactions and construction delays tested their resolve. How could we maintain and even deepen a sense of unity and collective purpose among colleagues during such times?

Mr Sajeev Jesudas, a member of the WH Development Board Committee leading the Manpower Workgroup, reflects on the uphill battle. "The guidance the Board gave the management team was to bring together employees under a common vision, culture and purpose of why they are part of WH," he says.

"This was definitely not an easy task, especially with teams scattered across different sites. And when you threw COVID-19 into the situation, it became even more complicated."

Despite these formidable obstacles, the management and Human Resource teams devised innovative ways to connect with colleagues and build a robust workforce of more than 3,000. Initiatives such as interest groups and people-centred wellness programmes played a crucial role in bridging gaps. The People & Organisation Development team also introduced Team Formation Conversations – an intervention enabling our colleagues nesting at different sites to build trust, relationships and team identity through open dialogues.

Dr Howard Foo, Chief Human Resource Officer, is deeply encouraged when he reflects upon these formative years. "I am humbled that, together with our leaders, our HR team has weathered the storm and did not give in despite the many uncertainties and challenges they faced," he shares. "Their mettle will enable them to withstand any challenges that may lie ahead."



Cycling enthusiasts, The Wheelers Gang, exemplify how colleagues formed special interest groups across departments.



DR NICHOLAS CHEW
On finding joy
in work

Scan to watch!

“The guidance the Board gave the management team was to bring together employees under a common vision, culture and purpose. This wasn't easy, especially with teams scattered across different sites. When you threw COVID-19 into the situation, it became even more complicated.”

Mr Sajeev Jesudas, Member, Woodlands Health Development Board Committee, on cultivating a WH identity

EMPOWERING THE NEXT GENERATION OF HEALTHCARE COLLEAGUES

As the healthcare landscape continues to evolve, Woodlands Health stays ahead of the curve by fostering an environment rich in training and research opportunities. Here's a glimpse at how we're preparing our workforce for the future:

HEALTH COACHES: Equipped with essential skills and knowledge, health coaches offer personalised support and guidance to residents. They play a crucial role in the community by ensuring residents not only receive the care they need but also stay well-connected with their healthcare teams.

COMMUNITY NURSES: These nurses receive specialised training to provide care independently and facilitate meaningful conversations in Advance Care Planning, empowering them to lead these critical discussions effectively.

CARE SUPPORT ASSOCIATES (CSAs): Some CSAs have upskilled to take on a wider scope of responsibilities within multidisciplinary teams. For example, in 2022, four CSAs were trained to become specialists in applying casts, and handling crutches and other walking aids.

PHARMACY TECHNICIANS: With tailored training, they have taken on expanded roles in managing tasks, such as running the smoking cessation programme, which were once traditionally led by pharmacists.

ADVANCED PRACTICE PHYSIOTHERAPIST (APP): Led by highly trained physiotherapists, the APP service offers expanded care for musculoskeletal patients directly in the Emergency Department, bypassing the need for medical specialist intervention. This streamlined pathway allows for quicker, specialised care. The first cohort of APPs undertook extensive training, including shadowing orthopaedic specialists, supervised direct practice and completing courses on diagnostic imaging for musculoskeletal conditions.

RESEARCH AND INNOVATION: At the heart of our mission to advance healthcare and enhance patient outcomes is a thriving research and innovation culture. The Office of Research Development and Scholarship (WORDS) at WH champions initiatives, such as the Small Projects Utilising Teams (SPROUTS) programme, which are designed to promote interdisciplinary collaboration and nurture ground-up research initiatives.

The success in forging a united workforce is reflected in our Employee Value Proposition (EVP). This proposition emphasises service to the community, fostering a joyful and inclusive work culture for our people through creating a safe, caring and nurturing space, and offering growth opportunities for all with a strong focus on appreciation and recognition.

Mr Jesudas also highlights the importance of nurturing and retaining talent through ongoing learning and development. "When individuals feel supported and valued in their growth, they become invaluable assets to the organisation," he explains.

Ms Whitney Tan Zhi Ying, Senior Pharmacy Technician, echoes these sentiments and shares that her journey at WH has fostered both her professional and personal development. At WH, pharmacy technicians have the opportunity to expand their roles through training. For instance, Ms Tan has been empowered to take on additional planning and mentoring responsibilities. This includes creating planograms for ward stocks, collaborating with the nursing team to devise pharmacy workflows and conducting workflow briefings to prepare the pharmacy team for the opening.

Additionally, Ms Tan was given the chance to set up the inpatient smoking cessation programme, a task traditionally led by pharmacists. "Through my journey at WH, I've developed a growth mindset, which allows me to embrace challenges more readily," she says. "I'm beyond excited that our efforts are finally coming to fruition with the opening of WH and that we can serve the residents and patients who come to us."

CARING FOR OUR OWN

The pandemic shone a stark light on the critical need to put mental health at the forefront in the workplace. At WH, this recognition led to the formation of the STRONG taskforce – a tripartite collaboration comprising the then Organisation Development, WellCARE Peer Support Programme and the Human Resource Department – established to support colleagues during these challenging times.

An insightful "burnout calculator" was aimed at assessing one's burnout level in the hope that individuals would proactively take steps to care for themselves during the COVID-19 period.

Another notable initiative was the "Check Your Pause" sessions, where colleagues picked up useful skills such as mindfulness practices and emotional regulation techniques. These initiatives aimed to cultivate a culture where our colleagues are encouraged to share their challenges, seek advice on stress management and support one another.



Scan to watch!

MR SAJEEV JESUDAS
On the Manpower
Workgroup



Colleagues at the tea appreciation event for self-care in July 2023, where we learnt about tea culture as a form of self-care.

Subsequently, the Total Workplace Safety and Health Council was formed, comprising the Workplace Safety Committee, the Occupational Health Committee, the Staff Wellbeing Committee and the Staff Protection Sub-committee. The objective is to protect and promote the health, safety and wellbeing of all our colleagues.

In collaboration with the Psychology Department, the WellCARE team introduced Recharge 101 and Recharge Guide 201, which were designed to teach colleagues how to manage stress and prevent burnout effectively. These invaluable resources offer a variety of relaxing activities, exercise recommendations and self-reflection tips.

To address potential negative interactions on Campus, our Staff Protection Sub-committee safeguards colleagues from abuse by patients, caregivers and next of kin. This committee focuses on recommending protection strategies, reviewing measures to deter abuse, and ensuring clear channels for incident reporting and follow-up support are available, so affected colleagues receive the help they need.

PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT

Despite spanning different public healthcare institutions, our clinical and operational teams demonstrated a strong commitment to joint training and rehearsals. Teams were



Opposite page and above:
The Intensive Care Unit
that was nested in
Tan Tock Seng Hospital.

The Central Sterile Supplies Department
is key to ensuring equipment gets
supplied to clinical services such as
the Operating Theatre.

nested together whenever possible to build a shared culture and facilitate better coordination between members. This collaborative effort was particularly evident among our Intensive Care Unit (ICU) colleagues at Tan Tock Seng Hospital.

Starting in June 2022, interdisciplinary workflow drills, collaborations and rapport-building sessions became the norm for our ICU clinicians, nurses and allied health professionals, setting the stage for effective teamwork. Between January and July 2022, our Central Sterile Supplies Department also gathered team members from different hospitals to harmonise process flows and system training.

As the December 2023 opening date drew near, full-dress rehearsals took centre stage at the Campus from late October 2023. These were focused on perfecting clinical workflows and ensuring smooth patient handovers within the physical facilities. These rehearsals involved more than 100 colleagues from various clinical departments, including Orthopaedic, Ophthalmology,

Radiology, Otolaryngology, Respiratory Medicine, Allied Health Services, Pharmacy and Surgery.

Additionally, colleagues from administrative and operational departments such as People & Organisation Development, Patient Billing Services, Clinical Operations (Surgical and Medicine), Inpatient Operations, Clinical Services, and Specialist Outpatient Clinic (SOC) Operations also played pivotal roles in these preparations.

It is often said that “practice makes perfect”. These full-dress rehearsals enabled us to refine our clinical and operational procedures, ensuring that every team member was ready to provide top-notch care from the moment the Campus’ doors opened.

WELCOMING THE WH FAMILY HOME

With the full-dress rehearsals in full swing, the WH Family knew a new chapter was unfolding. After a decade nested across various public healthcare institutions, it was finally time for everyone to come home.



This page and opposite page: Countless full-dress rehearsals enacted workflows at various hospital locations, including the Emergency Department, Operating Theatres and General Ward – all to ensure smooth operations when D-Day arrived.



Our Homecoming Readiness Taskforce worked hard to prepare, unite and ignite excitement among colleagues with engaging activities.

Leading the charge was the Homecoming Readiness Taskforce, which was part of the People Readiness Workgroup under the Go-Live Steering Committee. Their mission? Prepare, unite and ignite excitement among colleagues with a series of engagement activities.

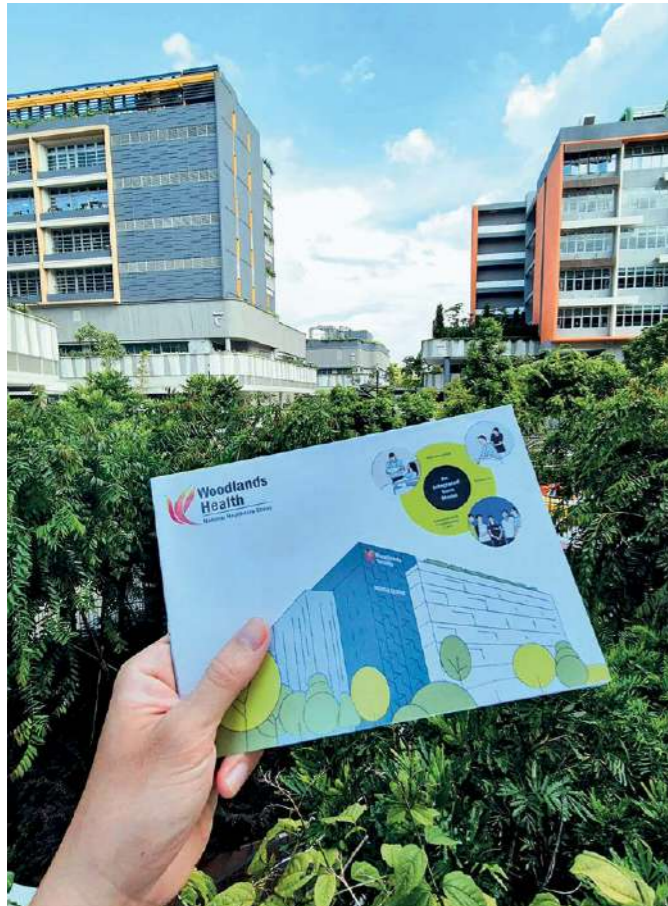
Our “Welcome Home!” Reboarding programme was rolled out ahead of the Campus’ opening in December 2023, starting with sessions for the SOC and Post Acute and Rehabilitative Care (PARC) teams. These sessions were an important touchpoint, allowing teams to meet and mingle for the first time within the same working areas.

As anticipation for our May 2024 opening grew, the programme was scaled up to welcome more colleagues into the fold. From January to April 2024, a host of activities and social events created a warm, welcoming atmosphere, cultivating a deep sense of belonging.

As the day came to a close, the excitement of the session still reverberated in me. The lively games, the butterfly and the ‘welcome home’ message left a memorable impression as we started our journey together as one team.

Sister Tan Hongyun, Assistant Director, Nursing Administration, Woodlands Health, on the homecoming session

Colleagues received an illustrated map of the Campus to familiarise themselves with their new environment.



We’ve forged bonds and relationships, making a lifetime of friends here. We’re exiting a build-and-development phase and entering the operational phase. My heartfelt gratitude to everyone – and my deepest, sincerest wishes for the future and the very best for WH.

Mr Glenn Neo, Chief Information Officer, Woodlands Health, on how the WH Family has persevered together

The feedback from these sessions was resoundingly positive. More than 90 per cent of attendees expressed a heightened appreciation for the WH journey and everyone’s contributions. Many also gained a better understanding of our mission, our Model of Care, the community we serve and the way we work – fuelling their excitement to contribute.

To acknowledge the hard work of our colleagues across departments, who had been tirelessly juggling the demands of preparing for the Campus opening, the Homecoming Readiness Taskforce introduced several morale boosters. These included limited-edition milestone collectibles, thoughtful Homecoming gifts and festive celebrations such as the Dinner and Dance.

Sister Tan Hongyun, Assistant Director, Nursing Administration, vividly remembers the electric atmosphere of the PARC homecoming session. “As the day came to a close, the excitement of the session still reverberated in me,” she recalls. “I’m sure many of our colleagues who attended felt the same way. The lively games, the butterfly and the ‘welcome home’ message left a memorable impression as we started our journey together as one team.”



The 2023 Dinner and Dance was a fantastic opportunity for colleagues from different departments to mingle, get to know each other and have a lot of fun!

Without a doubt, this homecoming was long and peppered with challenges. Yet, the WH Family persevered together, says Mr Glenn Neo, Chief Information Officer. “We’ve forged bonds and relationships, making a lifetime of friends here,” he remarks. “We’re exiting a build-and-development phase and entering the operational phase. My heartfelt gratitude to everyone – and my deepest, sincerest wishes for the future and the very best for WH.”



WHERE WE ARE HEADING

We're striding towards the future together.

WOODLANDS HEALTH OPENED ON 22 December 2023, marking the culmination of a journey characterised by hard work and dedication. Colleagues who had previously been nested in different hospitals celebrated our homecoming as we finally opened our doors to the residents of Singapore's North-Western region. Despite challenges like the COVID-19 pandemic, our commitment to shaping healthcare prevailed. As we reflect on our journey, we celebrate milestones and look to the future with hope — marking not just the end of one chapter, but the beginning of many more to come.



CHAPTER 11

THE TIME IS HERE!

Welcoming our Woodlands Health Family home

ON THE MORNING of Friday, 22 December 2023, Chief Executive Officer Dr Jason Cheah and the senior management team of Woodlands Health (WH) made their rounds through the Campus. They hoped to boost the morale of their colleagues as they prepared for the facility's most significant milestone yet: welcoming the first patients to WH. "The general sentiment among our colleagues in the community hospital ward and specialist clinics was, 'we can finally get to care for patients in our new hospital! It's such a great feeling!'" Dr Cheah shares.

Despite facing multiple delays due to a global pandemic and other unforeseen challenges, the Medical Centre remained on track for its opening. Colleagues buzzed with excitement that day, as the journey to get up and running was nearing the end. To celebrate this milestone, a welcome breakfast was organised for colleagues and contractors on site that day. The Human Resource team distributed more than 700 breakfast packs and drinks, adding to the sense of community and celebration.



Our senior management team visiting departments and teams around the Campus to thank those who worked hard for this milestone. They presented hampers and words of encouragement, which boosted morale on the ground.



Amid all the excitement on Campus, the Human Resource team ensured that colleagues were well-fed and energised for the big day.

A TRUE HOMECOMING

Although a small cohort of colleagues had previously worked together at the COVID-19 Treatment Facility and Community Care Facilities during the pandemic, the December 2023 opening marked the true start for the WH Family. This first phase saw the introduction of 40 community hospital beds in the Post Acute and Rehabilitative Care (PARC) Ward, specialist outpatient services at the Medical Centre for conditions such as asthma and diabetes, as well as the Radiology, Rehabilitation and Pharmacy Departments.

As one of the clinicians overseeing the Community Hospital Ward, Dr Wu Huei Yaw, Divisional Chairperson, Division of Integrated & Continuing Care, was particularly excited about the opening. "After many years of planning, we are finally able to come together and work as a team," he says. "The December 2023 opening gave me a glimpse of the 'person-centred' care that we always wanted to provide to the patients who come through our doors. We hope to continue maintaining this high standard of care."



Minister for Health, Mr Ong Ye Kung, visiting patients in the Post Acute and Rehabilitative Care (PARC) Ward to check on their wellbeing and ensure they are settling in smoothly.



The first patient to visit the Level 2 Specialist Outpatient Clinic for an Occupational Medicine appointment.



From right to left: Minister for Health, Mr Ong Ye Kung; Dr Nicholas Chew, Chairman, Medical Board, Woodlands Health; and Dr Yap Him Hoo, Deputy CEO, National Parks Board.



The opening ceremony kicked off on a joyful note with a speech by Minister for Health, Mr Ong Ye Kung, after enjoying a Christmas medley performed by students and the principal from Christ Church Secondary School. To mark this special occasion, Mr Ong joined Ms Jennie Chua, Chairman, WH Development Board Committee, and Dr Cheah in a hand-imprinting ceremony. Ms Chua then presented Mr Ong with a moss frame memento, which was specially created with rocks excavated from the ground on which the Campus sits.

This was followed by a tree-planting ceremony attended by distinguished guests. Mr Ong; Dr Nicholas Chew, Chairman, Medical Board (CMB), WH; and Dr Yap Him Hoo, Deputy CEO of National Parks Board (NParks), each took up a shovel to help plant a noteworthy tree for the occasion. Chosen by NParks for this event was the *Memecylon ovatum* Smith, a native tropical flowering plant known for its medicinal properties. When in full bloom, the tree is a sight to behold, with vibrant blue and purple hues.





Distinguished guests at the opening on 22 December 2023.



The first PARC patients being transferred from WH's pre-operations wards at Yishun Community Hospital, continuing their care with the same team of doctors, nurses and allied health professionals.

RECEIVING OUR FIRST PATIENTS

That same morning, at 9.30 am on the dot, we welcomed our first PARC Ward patients. They were transferred from the pre-operations wards at Yishun Community Hospital, as well as from Khoo Teck Puat Hospital and Tan Tock Seng Hospital. In the weeks that followed, the PARC Ward continued to receive patients from sister institutions within the National Healthcare Group.

FOSTERING TEAM SPIRIT

The December 2023 opening presented the first significant opportunity to cultivate team spirit among colleagues and evaluate how well they worked together. For Chief Nurse Ms Pua Lay Hoon, the experience turned out to be highly positive. "There was no segregation between the medical, nursing and operations teams," she says. "We really came together and collaborated as a very strong team, and this was a result of clear communication from our leadership." The spirit of unity only strengthened over the following weeks, smoothing out any initial hurdles and fostering ties among colleagues.



The Post Acute and Rehabilitative Care (PARC) Ward nursing team and Senior Physiotherapist Mr Joshua Foo leading patients in rehab exercises at the Woodlands Healing Garden.

NURTURING CONNECTIONS AMID NATURE

In the week following the opening, WH showed everyone how healthcare and nature can go hand in hand. Patients in wheelchairs did their rehabilitative exercises outdoors in the Woodlands Healing Garden integrated with the Campus. With blue skies and the sun shining brightly, it was a wonderful sight and showed how special this place can be for healing and relaxation.

The Campus has many other serene spots like this garden, such as an amphitheatre, and even green spaces designed for different needs, all meant to make people feel better by being close to nature. Not only do patients get a breath of fresh air as they work on getting stronger, but residents in the area can also visit to enjoy the peaceful setting.

A FIRST BIRTHDAY

Following the December 2023 opening, a heartwarming moment unfolded as nurses gathered to celebrate the birthday of a patient in the PARC Ward. With a cake baked by Mr Tay Kok Beng, Senior Production Chef at WH, they sang the birthday song. It brought sheer joy to the patient at the unexpected celebration.



MS PUA LAY HOON

On nurses as coordinators for care continuity



Scan to watch!

Heartwarming moments! Colleagues at the PARC Ward surprising a patient with a birthday celebration, featuring a cake baked by Chef Tay Kok Beng.

“There was no segregation between the medical, nursing and operations teams. We really collaborated as a very strong team, and this was a result of clear communication from our leadership.”

Ms Pua Lay Hoon, Chief Nurse, Woodlands Health, on the growing team spirit among colleagues



This page and opposite page: Receiving our first patients in the Emergency Department, Operating Theatres and various clinical services on 2 May 2024.



ACHIEVEMENT UNLOCKED

On 2 May 2024, we proudly opened our Emergency Department, Operating Theatres, acute hospital wards and various clinical services across the hospital. This significant milestone marked the next step in our journey to provide comprehensive care for the North-Western region.

As patients were received at the Emergency Department for immediate treatment, the extensive planning and preparation by dedicated colleagues came to fruition. The anticipation was palpable as everyone eagerly carried out their duties, making all the hard work and practice worthwhile.

At 9.30 am, the first acute patients arrived, transferred from Khoo Teck Puat Hospital (KTPH). The inpatient clinical, operations and Pre-Hospital / Emergency Department teams had worked closely with KTPH for months to ensure smooth, seamless transfers. As the PARC patients began their move from the Long Term Care Tower to Tower B, the PARC team, which had been based out of wards E71 and E72 since December 2023, could not wait to finally settle into their new homes in the hospital Towers.

All in, it was all systems go, with the Emergency Department, Operating Theatre, wards and Medical Centre fully operational from that day onwards.

“We have been ramping up operations rapidly to help ease the overall patient load in the Northern region,” Dr Cheah shares. “As at 10 May, we have cared for 206 patients in our inpatient wards and seen 185 patients come through our Emergency Department. Specialist clinic visits have also totalled more than 2,000 since operations started in December 2023.”

“**We have been ramping up operations rapidly to help ease the overall patient load in the Northern region.**”

Dr Jason Cheah, Chief Executive Officer, Woodlands Health, on the progress since December 2023





Opposite page: Minister for Health, Mr Ong Ye Kung, visiting the Campus on 17 May 2024, following the opening of the Emergency Department and various clinical services.

The senior management team visiting different departments and clinical services to cheer them on during the opening!



THE MOMENT WOODLANDS HEALTH BECAME A REALITY FOR ME

22 December 2023 marked the historic day WH began operations. Yet every one of the thousands of colleagues carries a special memory that symbolises the opening of the Campus for them. Here are some of these memorable experiences.

PUTTING OUT THE WELCOME MAT

Ms Jennie Chua, Chairman, WH Development Board Committee

Ms Chua's standout moment during her WH journey occurred roughly a month before the Medical Centre's opening on 22 December 2023. A group of cyclists, including Minister for Health, Mr Ong Ye Kung, stopped by the Campus' entrance en route to their destination. Although the Campus was not open yet, Ms Chua was there to greet them, offering bananas, water and wipes to refresh themselves.

This impromptu gathering right at the Campus' doorstep was more meaningful to her than any formal event could have been. It symbolised the hospital's early efforts to connect with the community. "It was special that we were finally able to welcome people to our doorstep, even though they couldn't come in yet," she recalls with a chuckle.

A LONG-AWAITED MEETING

Mr Muhammad Faiz Bin Abdul Rahmat Mordiffi, Senior Nurse Manager, General Medicine

For Mr Faiz, the realisation that the journey to opening was nearing its end came when he saw colleagues from different nesting sites come together on Campus for the first time. This gathering in the auditorium, marking many of his peers' first steps inside the Campus, stood out as a poignant milestone. He remembers observing their initial reactions, from the excitement of seeing their new workspaces and equipment, to their mild disorientation at the expansive grounds. Mr Faiz says, "Just seeing them experience the space they had envisioned for years for the first time was meaningful to me."

READY TO SERVE

Mr Tay Kok Beng, Senior Production Chef

The moment Chef Tay's kitchen on Campus was set up and ready to go was when the idea of WH became real for him. Being greeted warmly by his team and seeing all the equipment in place and sections organised brought back the sense of purpose he committed to years ago. "At that moment, I was really happy that the kitchen was ready," he recalls. "When the staff said, 'Morning, chef!', I just wanted us to start serving our next meal."

Opposite page:
Ms Jennie Chua (in yellow), Chairman of the Woodlands Health Development Board Committee, welcoming Minister for Health, Mr Ong Ye Kung, and his group of cycling hobbyists to the Campus ahead of its opening.





IN THE
*Pink of
Health*

Woodlands Health welcomed our first patients with the opening of the Medical Centre and 40 community hospital beds in the Post Acute and Rehabilitative Care Ward on 22 December 2023.



CHAPTER 12

COMING FULL CIRCLE

Celebrating our biggest supporters

WHEN WOODLANDS HEALTH (WH) OPENED our doors to the first patients on 22 December 2023, the moment was not just business as usual. For our pioneer team and supporters, it was the culmination of a decade-long journey filled with hard work, dedication and an unwavering commitment towards a shared vision of shaping the future of healthcare.

From the early days of planning and construction to the interruptions posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, we experienced numerous trials and triumphs. As our team looks back on our journey, we reflect on memorable moments, how we felt witnessing everything we worked hard for come to fruition, and our hopes for the future.

CHERISHED MOMENTS TO REMEMBER

DR WU HUEI YAW

Divisional Chairperson, Division of Integrated & Continuing Care



“ I remember the family was so grateful that they sent a thank you card to the team saying how much they appreciated the effort. That stayed in my memory for a long time. Seeing how the WH doctors, nurses and social workers all worked together, I realised the team we assembled is actually very good and willing to go the extra mile for patients. ”

Dr Wu treasures the teamwork, compassion and can-do spirit displayed by WH colleagues during the COVID-19 pandemic, despite the challenges faced. He especially remembers the efforts to arrange a family visit for a 100-year-old patient before her passing, which helped bring closure to the relatives.

MS PUA LAY HOON

Chief Nurse



Witnessing the WH teams from various nested institutions move into the WH Campus, Ms Pua feels a wave of immense pride and gratitude towards all who have made the opening of WH a reality.

“ The opening of Woodlands Health is a testament to our unwavering commitment to providing care to our community. After years of being nested in other institutions, and countless hours of training, we are finally home. I am incredibly proud of everyone for their hard work, passion and dedication to our shared mission. As we embark on this new journey, let's uphold the Woodlands Health nursing vision of being Committed, Competent, Confident and Cohesive. Together, let's continue to make a positive difference in the lives of those we serve. Here's to a future filled with compassion, healing and endless opportunities. ”

MR TAY KOK BENG

Senior Production Chef



“ I was so excited, to the point where I could not sleep. I was eager to get going once I knew the kitchen was ready. As a chef, my goal is to serve our meals to all our patients, hoping they'll enjoy the food and feel satisfied, knowing we've done our best. ”

Chef Tay's standout moment involves discovering a method to preserve the texture of sauces and gravies for hospital meals during his work on WH's cook-chill concept. His biggest frustration with serving "dried-up gravy" spurred him on to make these meals palatable even after reheating. He recalls the satisfaction when WH finally opened.



MR RAMLEE BUANG

WH Development Board Committee Member

Mr Buang shares a lighter moment, expresses his gratitude for being part of WH's journey and hopes to continue forging ahead with the team.

“ I remember when the management team and board members did a 'food tasting' feedback session for inpatient meals. I told everyone that if we maintain this level of quality when we upscale operations, patients would be in for a treat and their stay would be more pleasant. Building the hospital and its supporting infrastructure is only the first step in providing seamless, integrated care beyond the hospital walls. I wish the entire WH team the best in building a healthcare ecosystem in the North of Singapore and to remember that we exist to 'add years of healthy life'. I am thankful and honoured to play a small part in this journey. ”

MR LOCK WAI HAN

WH Development Board Committee Member



“ The construction of the Campus was one of the most challenging I have ever been involved in. The impact on MRT tunnels, groundwater movements, hard rock excavation, COVID-19, dengue risks, construction costs and manpower issues created a perfect storm. The construction team's commitment and resilience shone through, highlighting their outstanding abilities and character. It inspires me to see the Group's leadership build the WH team and rally the Workgroups and staff over the last 10 years to achieve this feat. Thank you for the opportunity to be part of the journey, and I am confident that WH will continue to serve the healthcare needs of its patients for many years ahead! ”

In his roles on the Infrastructure Development Committee, IT Workgroup, and Finance, and Audit and Risk Workgroup, Mr Lock gained a multifaceted perspective on the Campus' development and was inspired by the team's commitment and resilience, despite early challenges.

“ WH is the first to start planning a de novo without an existing hospital. It meant that everybody we hired, from zero to 3,000-plus now, had to be placed somewhere; they were disseminated across practically all hospitals. Pulling off this manpower, recruitment and placement 'Tetris' is something I'm very proud of – and we've even forged an identity along the way. ”

DR WONG KIRK CHUAN

Chief Operating Officer



Dr Wong orchestrated a complex staffing exercise, like a puzzle video game, while building a cohesive team from scratch in the absence of a hospital campus.

CAPTURING THE TEAM'S EMOTIONS AND HOPES FOR THE FUTURE

ER PROF LAU JOO MING

WH Development Board Committee Member



“
The WH Campus was completed to the best of everyone's efforts, from workers to contractors, consultants, hospital and MOH Holdings teams. No one dropped the ball, and hence, we now have this Campus to serve the healthcare needs of the North-Western region. I've always believed that we never have beauty in mind when we start designing infrastructure. But if it's not beautiful when completed, the design solution is wrong. The Campus is beautiful. The Infrastructure Design Committee mooted by Chairman Jennie Chua steered the teams to work much harder, given the numerous extraordinary challenges. But it was a promise, and we have delivered. My wish is for the WH team to bring better health to the community and continue serving the people with pride.”

Er Prof Lau feels pride and fulfilment watching the Campus come to fruition. Despite unforeseen setbacks in the early phases, such as poor soil conditions and the COVID-19 pandemic, the team's resilience delivered a stunning Campus.

MS SERENE CHEW

Senior Dietitian



For Ms Chew, WH's first Senior Dietitian, an overwhelming sense of pride took over when she saw colleagues and patients walking around the Campus for the first time.

“
Seeing the Campus start to fill with staff and patients after such a long waiting and planning period – I felt like a proud parent! There are so many hopes and wishes for 'my child', and expectations of what can be achieved in the future. I know there will be learning points and celebration milestones in our future. I wish Woodlands Health and everyone in our WH Family a smooth opening and a warm welcome to our new home!”

MS NURAZLINA BTE NEN ASSAM

Senior Patient Service Associate, Specialist Outpatient Clinic Operations



“
The thought of setting up a hospital from scratch attracted me to join WH, and that moment has finally come. It was emotional when the floor plan I had been looking at finally came to fruition. Of course, it was very tiring, but the support from my colleagues kept me going and motivated.”

When WH finally opened, Ms Nurazlina recalls feeling a rush of emotions.

MS CHOW SIEW YING

Chief Financial Officer



“
As we embark on this journey, I wish to express my gratitude and admiration for each of my colleagues who have diligently contributed to the fruition of Woodlands Health Campus. I look forward to realising our commitment to providing excellent clinical care and serving the community around us to make a tangible difference in the lives of those who need it. We should embrace the opportunity to deliver value-based care and put the WH Model of Care into practice to create a sustainable healthcare system for our patients and community. Our collective efforts will contribute to building a healthier, more vibrant community for generations to come. Here's to a successful and fulfilling chapter ahead!”

Ms Chow is deeply appreciative of the WH team's hard work behind the scenes over the past decade. She also expresses optimism and confidence that these efforts will positively impact the health and wellbeing of the community and the generations ahead.

DR NAVIN KUTHIAH

Senior Consultant, Advanced Internal Medicine

If there's one word Dr Navin would use to describe WH, it would be "future-proof". He joined in 2018 under the perioperative medicine programme, and was later involved in integrating the Next Generation Electronic Medical Record (NGEMR) system in WH.



“
Be it the infrastructure, IT systems and the mentality of the staff, I think WH is forward-looking. Going live in December 2023 is just the beginning; we are going to continue to grow and evolve. I think that's what's so special about WH – we have that ability to look towards the future.”



DR PRATIK MUKHERJEE
Senior Consultant, Radiology

The first locum doctor at WH, Dr Pratik looks forward to seeing WH gain prominence and become a symbol of excellence.

“
Seeing the broad corridors of the hospital, the majestic Towers and the colourful, green façade fills my heart with pride. This is probably similar to receiving the keys of your own house or seeing one's child grow. Together with the WH Family, I am excited to provide the care and services our population deserves. I wish to see the WH logo soar high. May it become the beacon not only in the North of Singapore but also achieve laurels and recognition nationally and internationally.”

HEARTFELT APPRECIATION AND WELL WISHES

MR GAN KIM YONG

Deputy Prime Minister and
Minister for Trade and Industry



“
A new healthcare facility presents a precious opportunity to innovate and reinvent the way we deliver healthcare. At its groundbreaking, I challenged the WH management team to break new ground in the way they deliver and organise their services, and in how they care for the population in the Northern region. Today, I see that they have truly embraced that challenge and presented us with a healthcare campus which provides seamless, person-centric care, while embracing technology and innovation to improve productivity and provide better care for patients.”

Built from the ground up, WH is an opportunity to reinvent the way healthcare is delivered, Mr Gan shares.

MR ONG YE KUNG

Minister for Health



Mr Ong sends his warm regards to WH, which is paving the way towards better health for the population in the North-Western region.

“
Woodlands Health’s care model goes beyond its walls and into the community it serves. With the nation’s shift towards preventive health to meet the needs of an ageing population, Woodlands Health is well on track with its pre-hospital and community initiatives that empower and drive the population in the North-Western region towards better health. My heartfelt congratulations to Woodlands Health. This milestone is a significant step forward in our commitment to providing healthcare services to our community.”

PROFESSOR KENNETH MAK

Director-General of Health



Involved in the early planning stages for WH while he was the then Chairman, Medical Board at Khoo Teck Puat Hospital, Prof Mak is optimistic for its future.

“
I was there for the opening of its initial facilities; the excitement was palpable, and I think that energy will continue to sustain them eventually through the official opening of the rest of the hospital and into at least the first few years of hospital operations. But it’s always daunting; opening a new hospital is not easy. The challenges of working through the process to make sure that they work well will always be there. But I’m very confident that the management team will be able to take this in their stride and push on.”

PROFESSOR JOE SIM

Group Chief Executive Officer,
National Healthcare Group



“
Woodlands Health was built with a mandate to reinvent the way care is delivered, and to provide seamless integration of care within and beyond hospital walls. With our nation’s healthcare needs growing in volume and complexity due to our ageing population and increased chronic disease burden, I would like to express my appreciation to WH for their commitment in driving population health by collaborating with General Practitioners and community partners to deliver comprehensive health and social interventions. I am confident that WH will continue to be a steward of wellbeing and good health, while reinforcing the National Healthcare Group’s vision of Adding Years of Healthy Life.”

Reflecting on the journey from blueprint to reality, Prof Sim extends his appreciation to the team for realising the WH vision.

MR CHAN YENG KIT

Chief Executive Officer, SPH Media,
and Former Permanent Secretary (Health)



Acknowledging WH’s approach in extending care upstream, Mr Chan emphasises the importance of collaborative efforts between healthcare providers and community partners.

“
For patients to receive holistic care, healthcare providers must work closely with community partners. I am heartened by Woodlands Health’s efforts to engage and collaborate with the community, aligning with the nation’s Healthier SG initiative. The team’s push to bring care upstream has been notable and commendable. Initiatives such as the NurseFirst helpline, GPFirst programme and the Urgent Care Centre greatly improve accessibility and right-siting of care. My very best wishes to the entire team for an impactful journey ahead. I am confident you will continue to innovate, transform lives, and shape a healthier future for the residents.”

MR NG HOW YUE

Permanent Secretary for Health (Services)



Mr Ng is confident of the future-readiness of the WH Campus, drawing from lessons learnt from the COVID-19 pandemic.

“
The pandemic taught us how important it is to have good healthcare systems that can quickly adapt to handle outbreaks. To keep patients and healthcare workers safe, we needed to rethink how hospitals work during pandemics. The Woodlands Health Campus was built with these lessons in mind. The buildings help control infections, extra spaces can be used for isolating and treating patients, and new ways of working were introduced to keep everyone safe. I believe Woodlands Health is ready to serve the Northern region and its people for a long time.”



CHAPTER 13

BLUEPRINT TO REALITY

The Woodlands Health journey

THE JOURNEY OF CONSTRUCTING a new hospital from the ground up is more than just a project. For Woodlands Health (WH), it is a labour of love and steadfast commitment. From the initial planning stages to the unveiling of the new integrated health campus, we have navigated a remarkable

10-year journey while keeping to our vision of “adding years of healthy life” to the population we serve. Take a walk down memory lane to celebrate what we’ve achieved thus far, where every milestone tells a story of resilience and dedication towards improving lives.

2014: A NEW CHAPTER – WOODLANDS HEALTH PRIVATE LIMITED IS FORMED

It all started back in February 2014 when Mr Khaw Boon Wan, then Minister for National Development, announced the establishment of a new hospital in Woodlands to serve the fast-growing population in Singapore's North-Western region. But it would not just be any hospital; WH represented a chance to usher in a new way of delivering healthcare from the ground up. Understanding the pulse of the people served was paramount. Ideas flowed freely as industry leaders and voices from diverse fields came together. An ethnographic study was conducted to help paint a clearer picture of the residents' aspirations, and later formed the blueprint for a community-focused health campus rooted in the very fabric of Woodlands.



2017: BREAKING NEW GROUND

On 18 April 2017, a groundbreaking ceremony marked the monumental start of the construction journey. Presided over by Mr Gan Kim Yong, then Minister for Health, the Grassroots Advisers of Sembawang GRC, who included Mr Khaw Boon Wan, as well as Madam Halimah Yacob, then Grassroots Adviser, Marsiling-Yew Tee GRC, the ceremony signalled the beginning of bringing our vision to life.



2016: PAVING THE WAY TOWARDS A HEALTHIER COMMUNITY

We set out to meet the residents right where they are: in their homes and neighbourhoods. Our collaborations with community partners began, with dedicated teams reaching out to residents to empower them in their health journey. Both the Self-Managed Autonomous Regional Team (SMART) Community Nursing Team and Community Nurse Post were launched in 2018 – a signal of our commitment to serving the ageing population. Since then, community nurses have become familiar faces in the North-Western neighbourhoods, as they coordinate and provide care ranging from disease prevention and chronic disease management to end-of-life care.

2017 TO 2019: OPENING OF PRE-OPERATIONS WARDS, STARTING WITH D88 AT YISHUN COMMUNITY HOSPITAL

In October 2017, we moved forward in patient care by opening our first pre-operations ward – D88 – at Yishun Community Hospital. A dedicated care team, which comprised doctors, nurses and allied health professionals, was tasked to manage the 34-bedded ward. By December 2019, our network of pre-operations wards expanded to include wards D57, D68 and D77 at Yishun Community Hospital, as well as wards 82 and 86 at Tan Tock Seng Hospital.





2020: OUR COVID-19 RESPONSE TEAM RISES TO THE CHALLENGE

As the world came to a standstill during the pandemic, WH rose to the challenge. In the face of adversity, we were the medical lead at Singapore's first Community Isolation Facility at Pasir Ris D'Resort. In April 2020, we were also part of the multi-agency efforts to establish operations at the first large-scale Community Care Facility at the Singapore EXPO, which accommodated more than 8,000 at its peak. Colleagues from various nesting sites worked together to combat the pandemic.

Duty called once more in September 2021. We were tasked by the Ministry of Health to set up the first Community Treatment Facility for COVID-19 patients by repurposing the NTUC Health Nursing Home in Tampines. A week after this request for assistance, we opened the 250-bedded facility and received the first patients. The facility served seniors with mild symptoms who were clinically stable but required closer monitoring.

2021: WH'S MODEL OF CARE IS LAUNCHED

In 2021, we launched our Model of Care, a comprehensive framework that guides care delivery across various stages – from pre-hospitalisation to hospitalisation, to integrated and continuing care. The goal is for every individual to receive the support needed at each stage of their health journey.



2020: PROMOTING THE RIGHT-SITING OF CARE IN THE COMMUNITY

In September 2020, we kicked off several initiatives so that residents requiring medical attention would receive the right care in the right place. We launched the GPFirst programme and the first community-based Urgent Care Centre (UCC) @ Admiralty to improve right-siting and accessibility of care.

Complementing these efforts was the NurseFirst helpline, which we introduced in 2022 through a collaboration with Khoo Teck Puat Hospital. Since then, nurses trained in emergency triage have been providing advice and support for acute but non-life-threatening conditions, directing callers to the most suitable care option based on their symptoms.



2022: RAMPING UP COMMUNITY EFFORTS WITH COMMUNITY HEALTH POSTS

Stepping into 2022, we ramped up efforts to build Communities of Care, collaborating with community partners to care for residents' overall health and wellbeing. Anchored by Community Health Posts (CHPs), these networks empower individuals to take charge of their health – which aligns closely with the Healthier SG movement. We launched our first CHP in September 2022 at Care Corner Active Ageing Centre (Marsiling). As of February 2024, there are 12 CHPs and two satellite CHPs in the North-Western region.

2022: REACHING OUR TOPPING OUT MILESTONE

On 12 February 2022, the final structural beam was placed atop Tower B of our integrated acute and community hospital, signifying our momentous Topping Out milestone. The event, which was officiated by Minister for Health, Mr Ong Ye Kung, sparked excitement and anticipation for what lay ahead: the long-awaited opening of the new Campus.



MAY 2024: OPENING OF THE EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT, OPERATING THEATRES, ACUTE WARDS AND MEDICAL CENTRE

The rest of the hospital, including the Emergency Department, Operating Theatre, acute hospital wards and Medical Centre, opened from May 2024 onwards. This marked another significant milestone in our journey to provide comprehensive care services.



DECEMBER 2023: WELCOMING OUR FIRST PATIENTS

Nearly two years later, on 22 December 2023, we welcomed our first patients at our new Campus. Starting with 40 community hospital beds, along with rehabilitative and sub-acute care services and selected specialist clinic services, we began our operations. Notably, we are also the first public hospital to open with the integration of three national IT systems: the Next Generation Electronic Medical Record (NGEMR), the National Billing System (NBS) and the National Harmonised Integrated Pharmacy System (NHIPS).

13 JULY 2024: A MOMENT TO REMEMBER – CELEBRATING OUR OFFICIAL OPENING

Woodlands Health Campus was officially opened by Senior Minister Lee Hsien Loong on 13 July 2024. The 7.66-hectare Woodlands Health Campus is envisaged to be a major health hub for the North-Western region, and is designed to meet both the present and future healthcare needs of the people living in the area.





2024 ONWARDS: THE JOURNEY CONTINUES

With our comprehensive care services fully underway, Woodlands Health remains steadfast in our commitment to the residents we serve. Besides adding years to their lives, we aim to enrich those years with good health. We envision a place where every individual feels well-supported at each stage of their health journey, one that's marked by thoughtfulness and ease. Patients should leave the hospital knowing they've been guided through the process at every step.

CHAPTER 14

OUR STORY IN PICTURES

Cherishing the smiles, the bonds and the heart



THE ESSENCE OF WOODLANDS HEALTH (WH) cannot be easily captured in a single photo or page. As the images in this chapter show, the 10-year journey to where we are now encompasses many aspects, from the planning of the colourful Campus to the strong bonds forged among colleagues. Together, they showcase how we have gone beyond traditional healthcare by blending community, nature and innovation.

For instance, the thoughtfully chosen colours that adorn the various Towers not only beautify the Campus, but also help patients find their way around the spaces more easily. Meanwhile, our nesting strategy ensured that colleagues remained at the top of their game, and extensive preparations led to a smooth kick-off for our opening on 22 December 2023 as unity and teamwork have long defined our organisation's culture. These elements highlight our dedication to creating a welcoming and effective healthcare facility.



A NESTING STRATEGY

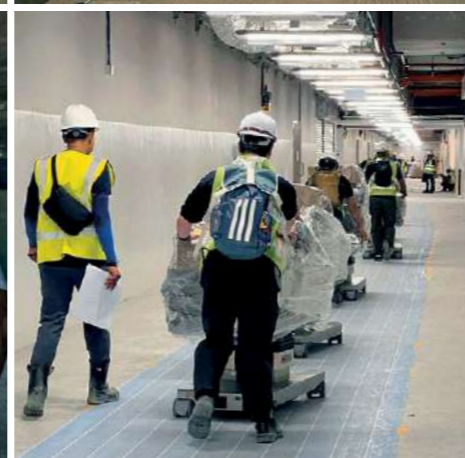
Nesting kept colleagues engaged and their skills sharp while the hospital was under construction. This ensured that the teams were prepared and familiar with the proper standards, allowing for a smooth transition when the Campus opened.







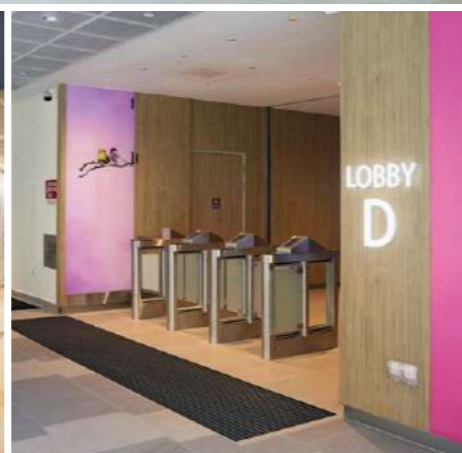
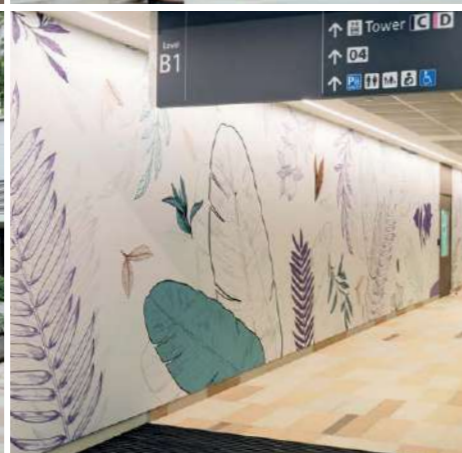
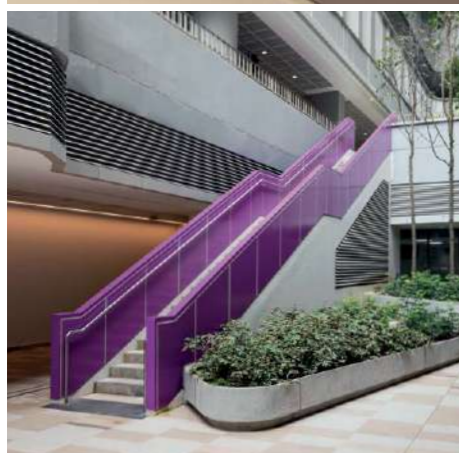
**TO BUILD
A CAMPUS**
WH broke ground on
18 April 2017 and Topped
Out on 12 February 2022
– the key construction
milestones in creating
a healthcare facility
blending nature with
community.



COLOURS FROM NATURE

The colours of our Campus are inspired by the hues of the rainforest, such as the yellow and orange of Heliconia flowers and the blue of water bodies. Each Tower is assigned a colour, which aids in navigation and adds to the calming, healing environment.







PRE-OPENING MOMENTS

Meticulous planning and full-dress rehearsals marked the pre-opening phase. We received our first patients on 22 December 2023. By 2 May 2024, the Emergency Department, Medical Centre, Operating Theatres, wards and specialist clinics were fully operational.





THE BONDS THAT BIND US
 Although lengthy and dotted with challenges, the decade-long progress towards our opening built a strong sense of camaraderie among colleagues.



Embracing diversity and respect

We celebrate diversity, show mutual respect and encourage joy.



Empathetic care

We provide care with love, humility and empathy.





Committed to care

We are dedicated to responsibly caring for our people, patients and community.



Better Health.
With You.



OUR COLLEAGUES' NOTABLE ACCOLADES

2015

**National Day Awards
Public Administration Medal (Bronze)**
Dr Wong Kirk Chuan
(Chief Operating Officer)

President's Award for Nurses
Pua Lay Hoon
(Chief Nurse)

2016

Nurses' Merit Award 2016
Tan Hongyun
(Assistant Director, Nursing Administration)

2019

**National Day Awards
Public Administration Medal (Bronze)**
Dr Tan Thai Lian
(Divisional Chairperson, Division of Medicine)

Nurses' Merit Award 2019
Ng Lily
(Assistant Director, Nursing Administration)

Tan Soak Buay (Chen Shumei)
(Advanced Practice Nurse, Surgical Inpatient)

2020

**National Medical Excellence Award
National Outstanding Clinician Educator Award**
Dr Nicholas Chew
(Chairman, Medical Board)

President's Award for Nurses
Kala D/O Narayanasamy
(Assistant Director, Nursing Administration)

**NHG Recognition Awards
Distinguished Senior Clinician Award**
Dr Koh Kwong Fah
(Senior Consultant, Anaesthesia)

Nurses' Merit Award 2020
Tan Siew Peng
(Assistant Director, Nursing Administration)

Quah Evelyn
(Nurse Clinician, Education & Development)

Public Administration Medal (Bronze)
Ng Poh Ling Yvonne
(Chief, People & Organisation Development)

2021

Nurses' Merit Award 2021
Shiji D/O Kuttan
(Assistant Director, Nursing Administration)

Taye Shi Min Charmaine
(Senior Nurse Clinician, General Medicine)

**NHG Recognition Awards
Distinguished Senior Clinician Award**
Dr Mohan S/O Tiruchittampalam
(Divisional Chairperson, Division of Pre-Hospital & Diagnostic Services and Division of Surgery)

**National Day Awards
Public Administration Medal (Bronze)**
Chow Siew Ying
(Chief Financial Officer)

Tam Ju-Aun, Daryl
(Director, Clinical Operations (Pre-Hospital))

**Public Sector Transformation Award
Dare to Do Award**
Chew Mei Mei, Melissa (Zhou Meimei)
(Chief, Medical Social Work)

2022

Nurses' Merit Award 2022
Soh Ah Lay Carol
(Senior Nurse Clinician, Emergency Nursing)

Wang Wenjing
(Assistant Director, Nursing Administration)

Wong Bee Cheng
(Assistant Director, Nursing Administration)

**National Day Awards
Public Administration Medal (Bronze)**
Dr Koh Kwong Fah
(Senior Consultant, Anaesthesia)

Distinguished Senior Clinician Award
Dr Lim Tiek Whai
(Chief, Intensive Care Medicine)

Dr Tan Thai Lian
(Divisional Chairperson, Division of Medicine)

**National Awards (COVID-19)
President's Certificate of Commendation (COVID-19)**
Woodlands Health

Public Administration Medal (Gold)
Dr Jason Cheah
(Chief Executive Officer)

Dr Nicholas Chew
(Chairman, Medical Board)

Pua Lay Hoon
(Chief Nurse)

Public Administration Medal (Silver)
Dr Mohan S/O Tiruchittampalam
(Divisional Chairperson, Division of Pre-Hospital & Diagnostic Services and Division of Surgery)

Dr Wong Kirk Chuan
(Chief Operating Officer)

Public Administration Medal (Bronze)
Chen Shunfu
(Director, Knowledge & Innovation)

Dr Jeremiah Chng
(Head, Preventive Health & Occupational Medicine)

Chow Siew Ying
(Chief Financial Officer)

Dr Elton Tay Lik Tong
(Chief, Ophthalmology)

Ho Chun Keong Eric
(Director, Allied Health Administration)

Dr Lee Jer En
(Deputy Divisional Chairperson, Division of Integrated & Continuing Care)

Lim Mee Mee Stephanie
(Director, HR Management)

Mohamad Abdul Wahab Bin Mohamed Yusof
(Assistant Director, Nursing Administration)

Neo Tze Guan
(Deputy Director, Nursing Administration)

Ng Lily
(Assistant Director, Nursing Administration)

Tam Ju-Aun, Daryl
(Director, Clinical Operations (Pre-Hospital))

Tan Lai Hong
(Deputy Director, Nursing Administration)

Tan Nam Ann
(Director, Operations Support Group)

Dr Toh Han
(Consultant, Anaesthesia)

Wang Yang
(Senior Nurse Clinician, Infection Control)

Wong Bee Cheng
(Assistant Director, Nursing Administration)

Dr Wong Yun Wah, Teresa Marie
(Consultant, Anaesthesia)

Yong Pei Chean
(Chief, Pharmacy)

2023

**Public Sector Transformation (PST) Award
Exemplary Innovator Award**
Dr Tan Yijia, Bryan
(Consultant, Orthopaedic Surgery)

Nurses' Merit Award 2023
Agnes Wong Siew Yong
(Nurse Clinician, Community Nursing)

Asannachiyaar Chinnathamby
(Senior Nurse Clinician, Ambulatory Care (SOC))

Muhammad Faiz Bin Abdul Rahmat Mordiffi
(Senior Nurse Manager)

Distinguished Senior Clinician Award
Dr Wu Huei Yaw
(Divisional Chairperson, Division of Integrated & Continuing Care)

**National Day Awards
Public Administration Medal (Bronze)**
Pua Lay Hoon
(Chief Nurse)

WITH GRATITUDE

We would like to extend our appreciation to the following individuals who contributed to the contents of this book. Your support and stories have brought our shared journey to life and made this book possible. To the many more who have helped us in the production of this book, thank you!

Polly Cheung

Lau Wing Chew

Carrie Chan

Joanne Lee

Neo Shaoqi

Jeremy Chia

Dorothy Wong

Esther Lim

Dr Nicholas Ng

Joanna Low

Michelle Lim

Dr Patsy Chow

Aw Wan Xin

Eric Ho

Lian Guojie

Chng Yi Hong

Yvonne Ng

Dr Jeremiah Chng

Jasmine Chan

Calean Lee

Sharon Tan

Yap Wei Qiang

Kirstie Wong



