MEDIA RELEASE

THE NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SINGAPORE LAUNCHES INAUGURAL MASTER OF SCIENCE IN AUDIOLOGY

_Siemens donates $19.5 million to help fund programme_

SINGAPORE. October 3, 2013 – The National University of Singapore (NUS) Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine today officially launched the inaugural NUS Master of Science in Audiology degree course, with key donor, Siemens Medical Instruments Pte Ltd. The event was inaugurated by the Minister for Health, Mr Gan Kim Yong.

With Singapore’s population growing older, demand for audiology services is on the rise: the National Health Survey of 2010 showed that one in five Singaporeans between 50 - 59 years old, and one in four between the ages of 60 - 69 already suffer from hearing impairment. Hearing impairment reduces communication, work and socialisation options. It is also linked to depression, memory loss and dementia. The postgraduate Audiology programme, administered by the NUS Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine’s Division of Graduate Medical Studies, thus aims to increase the pool of home-grown audiologists to meet the increased need for their services. Eighteen students have enrolled in the course, which began in August.

Said Associate Professor Lynne Lim, Programme Director of the Master of Science in Audiology programme,” A larger pool of audiologists would allow us to do more to raise awareness of the importance of hearing well, widen the reach of screening, locate care where it is most appropriate, optimise rehabilitation, expand the range of related clinical services like for tinnitus and ear-related balance disorders, and do research that brings about meaningful and useful clinical solutions.”

“Singapore-trained audiologists will be familiar with the local healthcare ecosystem, cultural nuances, and language differences. They can be involved in clinical and research most relevant to our type of patients very early. We hope to see more scholarships made available for future cohorts and we are grateful for the strong support of teaching and advisory faculty from both public and private sectors, as well as the help of companies and organisations
helping with the funding and equipping of the programme," added A/Prof Lim, who is also a Senior Consultant at the Department of Otolaryngology at the National University Hospital.

Health Minister Mr Gan Kim Yong lauded the efforts to set up the first local training pathway in audiology. The launch of the Audiology Master programme is a significant milestone for the Audiology profession in Singapore.

In a bid to continue its efforts to empower the Singapore population in areas of diagnosis and management of hearing impairment, medical technology giant Siemens, has donated a sum of S$19.5 million to help fund the programme. Part of the funding was used for the development and outfitting of an Audiology SMART classroom at the National University of Singapore - the first, dedicated SMART classroom for an Audiology programme in Southeast Asia, comprising cutting-edge audiology equipment and facilities. Dedicated clinical training space for the Audiology program has also been developed at a new Centre for Hearing, Speech and Balance (CHSB) at the National University Hospital, to ensure students are comfortable with patient care immediately on graduation. The majority of the $19.5m will be spent on running the programme over an eight-year period.

The Audiology SMART classroom enables direct High Definition video feeds to the CHSB. This direct video link provides instant access to the clinical centre, located more than a kilometre away, mitigating the demands of clinical placements as students can observe real-life situations and patient consultation throughout their course period.

“At Siemens, we firmly believe a large percentage of those with hearing loss could benefit from early identification, intervention, and appropriate management. This is why we have invested more than S$110 million in research and development in Singapore over the last four decades," said Dr Roger Radke, Group President and CEO of Siemens Audiology Solutions. “Our long-term aim has always been to develop talent and cultivate a culture of innovation in any country that we’re present in. We are thrilled that this pioneering batch of students will help steer our vision to create a new dimension in the Audiology landscape, and create more avenues and access to better hearing health. We believe our investment will aid in generating awareness of the significance of Audiology and we hope to ignite greater interest in this field of study and career path.”
The two-year full-time Audiology course is adapted from the Master of Audiology programme offered at the University of Melbourne, one of the top Audiology programmes in the world. It will integrate academics, clinical practice and research with hands-on experience to give students a holistic and dynamic experience. With a unique Asian focus, the course also incorporates local specifics, such as pathologies, genetics, regional infections, cultures and translational research. It is well supported by experienced local faculty and renowned teaching academics from Australia, the USA and the UK. There are nine scholarships in place to help students.

Kevin Lai, Director of Biomedical Sciences at the Singapore Economic Development Board (EDB) said, “We are excited by the launch of this new Master of Science in Audiology programme by a leading institution like NUS with strong support from Siemens. This programme, with its Asian focus, is a good example of the specialised talent Singapore is investing in to facilitate the access and adoption of medical devices to the region.”

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**About the NUS Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine (YLLSoM)**

Established in 1905, the NUS Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine was the first institution of higher learning in Singapore and the genesis of what would become the National University of Singapore. The School offers one of the finest undergraduate medical programs in the Asia Pacific region and commands international recognition and respect. The latest university rankings from Quacqarelli Symonds (QS) have again rated the School as Asia’s best for the third consecutive year. Globally, it is now ranked 20th, up one spot from its 2012 ranking.

The School admits 300 students to its medical undergraduate degree programme annually. It strives to fulfill its tripartite mission of providing excellent clinical care, training the next generation of healthcare professionals, and fostering research that will transform the practice of medicine. It plays a pivotal role in producing future leaders in healthcare delivery, discovery and public service as well as in Singapore’s Biomedical Sciences Initiative and Singapore Medicine, an initiative to further develop as a regional medical center.

The School’s 16 departments in the basic sciences and clinical specialties work closely with the Alice Lee Centre for Nursing Studies and the Centre for Biomedical Ethics to ensure that teaching and research are aligned and relevant to Singapore’s healthcare needs.
For more information about the Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine, please visit http://medicine.nus.edu.sg/corporate/

About Siemens Healthcare

The Siemens Healthcare Sector is one of the world's largest suppliers to the healthcare industry and a trendsetter in medical imaging, laboratory diagnostics, medical information technology and hearing aids. Siemens offers its customers products and solutions for the entire range of patient care from a single source – from prevention and early detection to diagnosis, and on to treatment and aftercare. By optimizing clinical workflows for the most common diseases, Siemens also makes healthcare faster, better and more cost-effective. Siemens Healthcare employs some 51,000 employees worldwide and operates around the world. In fiscal year 2012 (to September 30), the Sector posted revenue of 13.6 billion euros and profit of 1.8 billion euros.

For further information please visit: http://www.siemens.com/healthcare

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