

MEDIA RELEASE

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For Immediate Publication

MULTIDISCIPLINARY TEAM FROM NUHCS AND NUH OFFERS LIFELINE TO CHILDREN ACROSS THE PACIFIC

MOU between NUH and Fijian hospital will further strengthen and support health services in underprivileged communities in Fiji and the Pacific Islands



From left to right: Associate Professor Laszlo Kiraly, Head and Senior Consultant, Department of CTVS, NUHCS; Sri Madhusudhan Sai, Founder, SSSSCHF; Professor Aymeric Lim, CEO, NUH; Dr Krupali Tappoo, Director, SSSSCHF; and Mr Sumeet Tappoo, Chairman, SSSSCHF, at the MOU signing ceremony. Photo credit: NUH

SINGAPORE — In February 2025, a multidisciplinary team of 14 specialists from the Department of Cardiac, Thoracic and Vascular Surgery (CTVS) at the National University Heart Centre, Singapore (NUHCS) and the National University Hospital (NUH), which includes the Khoo Teck Puat – National University Children’s Medical Institute (KTP-NUCMI), travelled to Suva, Fiji for its third **Heart to Heart Mission**.

The mission trip is part of a global health initiative by NUHCS and NUH to provide patients in underprivileged communities with much needed healthcare, while supporting local health systems with transfer of medical skills and knowledge, education and training.

Every year, more than 2,700 children in Fiji and the Pacific islands are born with congenital heart disease (CHD), a life-threatening condition that claims lives before adulthood without timely treatment. In this region, there are no paediatric cardiac services available, and seeking treatment involves overseas travel, which most families are unable to afford.

This year's Heart to Heart Mission team comprised surgeons, anaesthetists, nurses, intensivists and perfusionists working alongside other medical professionals from Australia and India. They completed 14 complex surgeries at the Sri Sathya Sai Sanjeevani Children's Heart Hospital Fiji (SSSSCHF), over a period of six days. The team also performed the first open mitral valvotomy for rheumatic heart disease in Fiji.¹

A mission that transcends borders

In 2022, the Sai Prema Foundation Fiji established the SSSSCHF, a purpose-built facility to provide free cardiac screening and surgery for underprivileged children. The 54-bed facility has become a symbol of compassion, commitment, and medical excellence, and the team from NUHCS and NUH has been a part of SSSSCHF's efforts to provide life-saving paediatric cardiac surgery to children in need.

On 9 May 2025, NUH and SSSSCHF signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to support annual paediatric cardiac surgical missions to SSSSCHF. The missions will not only continue to provide surgeries to children in need, but will also serve as a platform for shared learning, professional growth and innovation between institutions.

"Such missions enable us to share our expertise with local doctors and nurses, and provide long-term coaching and professional support. The multidisciplinary team experience gained from the mission also offers learning opportunities to improve our own congenital heart disease programme, and nurtures a strong spirit of volunteerism and compassion in our medical professionals," said Associate Professor Laszlo Kiraly, Head and Senior Consultant, Department of CTVS, NUHCS, who has been leading the annual Heart to Heart Mission since 2022.

NUH and NUHCS will also welcome medical staff from SSSSCHF for short-term training and observerships, creating a supportive environment for visiting staff to thrive, learn and bring new skills back to their communities.

Professor Aymeric Lim, Chief Executive Officer, NUH, said, "This partnership illustrates the institutions' ongoing commitment to global health, with the core objective of improving the health and well-being of underprivileged communities. This also helps build public health capacity and further health security to defend against potential threats in the region. Our global health initiatives currently span across multiple countries, including Bangladesh, Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia and Philippines."

¹ Rheumatic heart disease is a condition where the heart valves have been permanently damaged by rheumatic fever. Open mitral valvotomy is a procedure to treat mitral stenosis, a condition where the mitral valve narrows, often due to rheumatic heart disease.

Chinese Glossary

National University Heart Centre, Singapore (NUHCS)	新加坡国立大学心脏中心 (国大心脏中心)
National University Hospital (NUH)	国立大学医院 (国大医院)
Heart to Heart Mission	心连心小儿心脏外科救援之行
Professor Aymeric Lim Chief Executive Officer National University Hospital	林玉堂教授 总裁 国大医院
Associate Professor Laszlo Kiraly Head and Senior Consultant Department of Cardiac, Thoracic and Vascular Surgery (CTVS) National University Heart Centre, Singapore	Laszlo Kiraly 副教授 主任兼高级顾问医生 胸肺外科部门 国大心脏中心

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About the National University Heart Centre, Singapore (NUHCS)

The National University Heart Centre, Singapore (NUHCS) is an academic, national specialist centre under the National University Health System (NUHS). NUHCS brings together the resources, expertise and capabilities in the areas of Cardiology, Cardiothoracic and Vascular Surgery to better meet the needs of the growing number of patients with heart disease and raise the future generation of medical professionals.

As one of two national heart centres in Singapore for the treatment and management of complex cardiovascular diseases, NUHCS offers six core clinical programmes including Heart Failure & Cardiomyopathy, Structural Heart Disease, Acute Coronary Syndrome, Heart Rhythm, Congenital & Structural Heart Disease and Women's Heart Health. The centre has been awarded two institutional Peaks of Excellence for its Minimally-invasive Cardiothoracic Surgery and Aortic Centre Programme, and has been ranked top in Singapore for three consecutive years in 2022, 2023 and 2024 for the specialty of Cardiac Surgery in Newsweek's "World's Best Hospital" Award.

Comprising a team of internationally-recognised cardiologists and surgeons from the cardiothoracic and vascular specialties, NUHCS serves as a referral national centre for cardiothoracic and vascular conditions and provides a comprehensive approach to the treatment of these patients. The holistic patient-care approach is backed by leading translational research at the Cardiovascular Research Institute (CVRI) and Cardiovascular Metabolic Translational Program, all of which complements these advanced quaternary clinical services to deliver state-of-the-art treatment solutions to the most challenging heart, lung and circulatory diseases.

NUHCS services span across four locations to serve the western and central locations in Singapore:

- NUHCS at National University Hospital (NUH), Kent Ridge - Main Operations
- NUHCS Heart Clinic @ Ng Teng Fong General Hospital (NTFGH)
- NUHCS Heart Clinic @ Jurong Medical Centre (JMC)
- NUHCS Heart Clinic @ Alexandra Hospital (AH)

For more information, visit: <https://www.nuhcs.com.sg>.

About the National University Hospital (NUH)

The National University Hospital (NUH) is Singapore's leading university hospital. While the hospital at Kent Ridge first received its patients on 24 June 1985, our legacy started from 1905, the date of the founding of what is today the NUS Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine. NUH is the principal teaching hospital of the medical school.

Our unique identity as a university hospital is a key attraction for healthcare professionals who aspire to do more than practise tertiary medical care. We offer an environment where research and teaching are an integral part of medicine, and continue to shape medicine and transform care for the community we care for.

We are an academic medical centre with over 1,200 beds, serving more than one million patients a year with over 50 medical, surgical and dental specialties. NUH is the only public and not-for-profit hospital in Singapore to provide trusted care for adults, women and children under one roof, including the only paediatric kidney and liver transplant programme in the country.

The NUH is a key member of the National University Health System (NUHS), one of three public healthcare clusters in Singapore.