MEDIA RELEASE

17 June 2025

NEW DIGITAL FEATURES HELP PATIENTS MAKE INFORMED DECISIONS AND REDUCE GUESSWORK ON EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT WAIT TIMES

Real-time emergency wait estimates enhance patient experience; more information to help patients understand where to seek help quickly for non-emergency conditions

SINGAPORE — Patients and caregivers visiting the key hospital Emergency Departments (EDs) and an Urgent Care Centre (UCC) under the National University Health System (NUHS) can now make more informed choices and better plan their visits, thanks to newly introduced digital features in the NUHS App that provide information on emergency wait times and enable health declarations to be completed before arrival.

The National University Hospital (NUH), Ng Teng Fong General Hospital (NTFGH) and Alexandra Hospital (AH) are part of the NUHS academic health system, one of three public healthcare clusters in Singapore.

Since 23 March 2025, users have been able to check estimated wait times at the NUH Children's Emergency, NUH's ED, NTFGH's ED and AH's UCC, even before arriving at their destinations. Wait times shown in the NUHS App are refreshed every 30 minutes, offering a near real-time snapshot of the patient load at the ED. The actual wait times on-site may vary depending on real-time incoming emergency cases.

Hospitals will continue to triage patients based on the severity of their condition and prioritise patients with the most serious medical needs. Priority 1 patients have life-threatening conditions that require immediate attention, Priority 2 patients have medical conditions that require early attention and assessment, while Priority 3 patients have minor conditions such as a cold or nosebleed.

NUHS data from 2024 showed that more than 85 per cent of Priority 3 patients did not require hospitalisation and were discharged after their visits. Respiratory tract infections, gastroenteritis and fractures were among the top reasons they sought medical attention in NUHS hospitals.

Adjunct Professor Malcolm Mahadevan, Group Chief of Emergency Medicine at NUHS, said: "We understand that seeking emergency care can be a stressful experience. The feature allows patients and their families to better plan their journey and make more informed choices.

"At the same time, providing transparency about wait times helps to support hospital operations by improving patient flow and managing expectations, especially during

periods of high demand," added Adj Prof Mahadevan, who is also a Senior Consultant in the Emergency Medicine Department at NUH.

To further improve the patient experience, those intending to visit the EDs or AH UCC on their own can now complete a health declaration form in the NUHS App prior to their arrival. Caregivers can also fill in the information on behalf of patients, including details such as symptoms and travel history. Previously, this information was collected only upon arrival at the hospitals.

With the form filled in advance, patients or their caregivers can simply show it to screeners at the entrance and proceed directly for registration. This improves triage efficiency and streamlines a patient's hospital journey.

Visual cues on the completed form help screeners identify high-risk patients or those who may be potentially infectious, allowing for prompt implementation of infection control measures.

Another new feature of the NUHS App serves as a comprehensive resource for people to navigate healthcare options.

If patients or their caregivers are unsure if the symptoms experienced warrant a hospital visit, they can access the NurseFirst helpline via the app. Staffed by trained emergency triage nurses from Woodlands Health, the helpline will direct callers to the most appropriate care site based on their symptoms described during the call.

Members of the public can also use the app to check where their nearest GPFirst and PaedsENGAGE[1] clinics are, within a 2km radius of the user's location. Users can also search using their home address or the NUHS postal code if their location services are disabled. In all, there are more than 260 GPFirst clinics and over 140 PaedsENGAGE clinics in the west of Singapore, providing accessible medical care to residents.

Adj Prof Mahadevan said: "By making key information accessible and easy to understand, we aim to empower patients while supporting our healthcare team in delivering timely and appropriate care. When patients are guided to the right level of care at the right time, it not only improves their overall patient experience but also contributes to a more sustainable healthcare system."

Jointly developed by NUHS and the national HealthTech agency Synapxe, the OneNUHS App was launched in April 2021. Since April last year, it has been known as the NUHS App. As at April 2025, there have been more than 840,000 unique users of the NUHS App.

The new features are being piloted by NUHS as part of its broader efforts to harness digital tools to improve care navigation and patient experience amid rising healthcare demand, especially with an ageing population.

With the Ministry of Health (MOH) planning to consolidate public healthcare apps into a unified platform by 2027, NUHS will continue to work closely with Synapxe and MOH to review its digital offerings for an improved user-friendly experience for the public. In the meantime, existing apps will be maintained and improved to ensure service quality

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[1] For children with mild to moderate conditions, their parents and caregivers are strongly encouraged to visit PaedsENGAGE (ENGagement and GP Empowerment) GPs instead of the Children's Emergency.

is not compromised during the transition period. These enhancements will also inform and contribute to the unified app's development.

Chinese Glossary

National University Health System (NUHS)	国立大学医学组织 (国大医学组织)
National University Hospital (NUH)	国立大学医院 (国大医院)
Ng Teng Fong General Hospital (NTFGH)	黄廷方综合医院 (黄廷方医院)
Alexandra Hospital (AH)	亚历山大医院
Synapxe	新联科技
NUHS App	国立大学医学组织应用 (国大医学组织应用)
NurseFirst	护士问诊热线
GPFirst	家庭医生首选计划
PaedsENGAGE	家庭医生首选计划（儿童）
Adjunct Professor Malcolm Mahadevan Group Chief, Emergency Medicine National University Health System	马儿肯客座教授 集团首席, 急诊科 国立大学医学组织
Senior Consultant Emergency Medicine Department National University Hospital	高级顾问医生 急诊科 国立大学医院

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About the National University Health System (NUHS)

The National University Health System (NUHS) aims to transform how illness is prevented and managed by discovering causes of disease, development of more effective treatments through collaborative multidisciplinary research and clinical trials, and creation of better technologies and care delivery systems in partnership with others who share the same values and vision.

Institutions in the NUHS Group include the National University Hospital, Ng Teng Fong General Hospital, Jurong Community Hospital, Alexandra Hospital and the upcoming Tengah General and Community Hospital; three National Specialty Centres – National University Cancer Institute, Singapore (NCIS), National University Heart Centre, Singapore (NUHCS) and National University Centre for Oral Health, Singapore (NUCOHS); the National University Polyclinics (NUP); Jurong Medical Centre; and three NUS health sciences schools – NUS Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine (including the Alice Lee Centre for Nursing Studies), NUS Faculty of Dentistry and NUS Saw Swee Hock School of Public Health.

With member institutions under a common governance structure, NUHS creates synergies for the advancement of health by integrating patient care, health science

education and biomedical research. As a Regional Health System, NUHS works closely with health and social care partners across Singapore to develop and implement programmes that contribute to a healthy and engaged population in the Western part of Singapore.

For more information, please visit www.nuhs.edu.sg.