

MEDIA RELEASE

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For Immediate Publishing

NUHCS PIONEERS SHARED CARE MODEL FOR HEART PATIENTS ACROSS HOSPITAL AND PRIMARY CARE

Specialists and primary care physicians work together to improve accessibility, affordability and continuity of care for heart patients

SINGAPORE — National University Heart Centre, Singapore (NUHCS)'s Shared Care Programme is transforming the way stable heart patients receive long-term care by enabling them to receive routine follow-up closer to home while remaining under the care of their specialist cardiologist at NUHCS.

Launched in July 2024, the programme brought together NUHCS specialists and primary care physicians from polyclinics and general practitioner (GP) clinics to co-manage suitable patients with stable but complex cardiac conditions, allowing them to receive accessible, community-based care without losing access to specialist expertise.

Under the programme, suitable patients are identified by their specialist at NUHCS based on established clinical criteria, including having stable heart conditions, well-controlled risk factors and no recent hospital admissions for cardiac disease. Once enrolled, patients receive regular follow-up from their preferred primary care physician, who works closely with the specialist team and has access to relevant clinical information from NUHCS. The primary care physician monitors the patient's cardiovascular health, optimises medications and manages cardiovascular risk factors according to agreed care protocols. At the same time, patients remain under the oversight of their NUHCS specialist and continue to attend annual specialist reviews, ensuring continuity of care across both settings.

Importantly, patients are not discharged from NUHCS during this period. If their condition changes or concerns arise, they can be promptly referred back for specialist assessment without needing to restart the referral process, ensuring continuity and timely access to care.

Since its launch, more than 380 stable cardiac patients have been enrolled in the programme. A comparison of patients' clinical indicators one year before and one year after enrolment found that cardiovascular risk factors remained stable or improved under the shared care model. Average systolic blood pressure was maintained at 132 mmHg, while average blood sugar control remained stable, with HbA1c levels at 6.5 per cent before enrolment and 6.6 per cent after enrolment. Average cholesterol levels improved from 2.21 mmol/L to 1.59 mmol/L over the same period.

Patients also benefited from approximately 18 per cent lower care costs through reduced consultation fees at community-based primary care settings.

Adjunct Associate Professor Lim Toon Wei, Head of Community and Preventive Cardiology, NUHCS and clinical lead of the Shared Care Programme said, "Based on the programme's performance to date, our findings suggest that carefully selected patients can receive routine follow-up in the community without compromising clinical outcomes, while benefiting from greater convenience and affordability. As Singapore's population ages and the prevalence of chronic cardiovascular diseases continues to rise, shared care enables specialists and primary care physicians to work more closely together in supporting patients across different care settings, while ensuring specialist services remain available for those with more complex or urgent needs." Adj A/Prof Lim is also a Senior Consultant at the Department of Cardiology at NUHCS.

NUHCS has expanded the Shared Care Programme to their patients at the NUHCS Heart Clinic at Ng Teng Fong General Hospital, and will continue to review opportunities to further strengthen the model based on patients' needs and programme outcomes.

The programme's emphasis on bringing care closer to patients aligns with NUHCS' wider efforts to strengthen heart health within the community. As part of World Heart Month, NUHCS hosted a community event on 6 September at Jurong Medical Centre, offering health screenings, heart health talks, physiotherapist-led exercise sessions and other activities aimed at helping the community better understand and manage their cardiovascular risk.

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)
Ng Teng Fong General Hospital (NTFGH)	黄廷方综合医院 (黄廷方医院)
Jurong Medical Centre	裕廊医疗中心
NUHCS Heart Clinic	国大心脏中心心脏诊所
Shared Care Programme	协同照护计划
Adjunct Associate Professor Lim Toon Wei Head of Community and Preventive Cardiology	林顿维客座副教授 社区与预防心脏科主任
Senior Consultant Department of Cardiology NUHCS	高级顾问医生 心脏内科 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>.