Specialist dental care gets boost with $370m centre

New facility can see more patients, provide care for those with special needs, and more

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The opening of a new $370 million national dental centre in Kallang will significantly increase the capacity for subsidised specialist dental treatment for means tested clinician-fee patients.

The National University Centre for Oral Health Singapore will also feature a world-class oral health institute with an annual turnover of $50 million, a 40 per cent increase from the previous East Coast campus.

Professor Ken-Low Kong, chief executive of the National University Health System (NUHS), said yesterday that the new, 50,000 sqm building, accommodates the nation's leading oral and craniofacial surgeon, and oral and maxillofacial surgery, which addresses diseases and injuries to the face, mouth and jaw.

The centre also provides multidisciplinary specialist care for patients with special needs, as well as those with congenital and complex conditions.

All of the treatment rooms are on the ground floor, making it easily accessible for patients using a wheelchair or those who require additional assistance in treatment. There is also a dedicated dental chair for patients who may be unable to be examined in a conventional dental chair arrangement.

There are also two treatment areas which are large enough to handle patients with special needs, such as those with learning disabilities or behaviour issues. At the centre, Health Minister Gan Kim Yong, who officially opened the centre, announced that a new two-year direct-entry graduate dental programme will be launched in 2022, with classes commencing in 2023. The programme is expected to start the year at the NUS Faculty of Dental Surgery.

Together with the existing National Dental Centre Singapore in the Outram Campus, the new centre will significantly increase the country's capacity for subsidised specialist dental treatment for community dental conditions, and offer care for patients with special needs, as well as those with congenital and complex conditions.

The new centre is part of the National University of Singapore (NUS) Faculty of Dentistry, which offers a comprehensive range of academic and professional programmes, from undergraduate to postgraduate levels.

Conceived over three years from 2015 to last year, the centre opened to the public in January this year. The new centre will also be able to expand key research areas like regenerative and tissue engineering, providing new solutions to dental and oral health challenges in Singapore.