

MEDIA RELEASE

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NEW NATIONAL CENTRE FOR SPECIALIST DENTAL CARE, DENTAL EDUCATION AND RESEARCH OPENS

- *The National University Centre for Oral Health, Singapore will provide the public with better access to comprehensive, multi-disciplinary specialist oral health services in one location.*
- *Housed in the new Centre, Singapore's only dental school – National University of Singapore Faculty of Dentistry will expand its undergraduate intake to train and nurture the next generation of oral healthcare professionals. The Faculty will continue to provide a comprehensive range of postgraduate training programmes.*
- *The co-location of clinical services, education, and research facilities, in the Centre within National University Health System, allows for synergy and optimises resources to bring about better services, academic and research.*

Singapore, 5 July 2019 - The National University Health System (NUHS) National University Centre for Oral Health, Singapore (NUCOHS) was officially opened by Minister for Health Mr Gan Kim Yong today.

The new National Dental Specialty Centre synergises clinical services, education and research facilities under one roof. The co-location of the National University Hospital (NUH) University Dental Cluster (UDC) and the National University of Singapore Faculty of Dentistry (NUS Dentistry) as well as research facilities, will provide the public with better access to comprehensive multi-disciplinary specialist oral health services, and also bring about more integrated and immersive academic and research.

NUCOHS is equipped with patient-centred facilities to manage the needs of patients from young children to the elderly, including patients with special needs and those with multiple co-existing medical conditions. NUCOHS will see up to 500 patients a day in the new facility – a 40% increase from its patient load four years ago. The 60% increase in capacity will allow provision of better and more accessible care.



Singapore's only dental school, NUS Dentistry, will re-locate to this new integrated facility. The NUCOHS will also house the training facilities for Nanyang Polytechnic students pursuing the Diploma in Dental Hygiene and Therapy as Oral Health Therapists (OHTs).

NUCOHS will also pave the way for impactful multi-disciplinary research in oral healthcare and population health such as translational research in oral-systemic links, regenerative biology and tissue engineering. It will also focus on public health research to meet the future demands of oral health with the aging population.

Said Mr Hsieh Fu Hua, Chairman, NUHS Board and Chairman, NUS Board of Trustees: "The opening of NUCOHS is a significant milestone for NUHS and NUS. The co-location of the dental specialists, professionals, students, faculty and researchers in one purpose-built oral healthcare facility will enable them to draw on each other's strengths to bring about better clinical care, high impact research and education to nurture the future generations of oral health professionals. NUCOHS is also designed to meet the growing needs of our aging population with complex conditions and mobility problems."

Addressing Singapore's emerging oral health needs

NUCOHS will be an integral part of the NUHS as it expands its healthcare infrastructure and services.

"Good oral health is critical to good overall health. With an increased incidence of diabetes, heart disease, cancer and other chronic diseases, understanding how oral health impacts on these conditions is part of the holistic care that NUHS is able to offer Singaporeans and all our patients through NUCOHS. Located within the heart of the Kent Ridge campus, NUCOHS will be able to draw on the academic strengths of NUS and leverage the comprehensive clinical and research excellence within NUHS," said Professor John Eu-Li Wong, Chief Executive of NUHS and Senior Vice President (Health Affairs) of NUS.

Increased accessibility and enhanced care for our patients

NUCOHS is well-poised to work closely with the rest of the NUHS medical departments at NUH, Ng Teng Fong General Hospital (NTFGH), and National University Polyclinics (NUP) to co-ordinate patient care pathway, patient referral and management of patients with medical conditions, such as diabetes, cancer and dementia. As part of the integrated oral health system within NUHS, oral health specialists and professionals from NTFGH dental clinics will be working closely with the multi-disciplinary care team at NUCOHS. NUCOHS is also working closely with NUP to integrate a structured E-referral system to ensure patients in the NUHS cluster benefit from the shared dental record system. NUCOHS aims to provide patients and their caregivers with better access to one-stop multi-disciplinary oral healthcare services, from the primary patient care to tertiary (specialist) care across NUHS and nationally.

All the treatment rooms in NUCOHS are wheel-chair accessible. Some of the rooms are specially designed and equipped to assist complex and special needs patients on wheelchairs or beds to be transferred to the dental chairs to receive dental treatment. Another senior-centred feature in NUCOHS is the wheelchair tilt chair which makes it fuss-free for frail elderly patients to receive treatment in their wheelchairs. NUCOHS is also equipped to treat patients who may not be able to be managed in a conventional dental chair due to their weight issues. These patients will receive their dental care on a specially designed bariatric dental chair. NUCOHS also has state-of-the-art facilities to care for children needing specialised dental care.

Beyond the Kent Ridge campus, there will be expanded continuity of care through collaboration between NUCOHS, and the intermediate and long-term care facilities, as well as caregivers at home. NUCOHS supports St Luke's Hospital in the oral health care needs of patients as part of their overall care plan.

NUCOHS has also stepped up its presence in the community through its work with the NUHS Regional Health System where it supports the oral health screening of Project Silver Screen for seniors. It also supports the works of community partners to conduct oral health screening, early detection and oral health promotion activities in neighbourhoods across western Singapore.

Training and nurturing the next generation of oral health care professionals

With the integrated facilities, undergraduate students of NUS Dentistry can look forward to more personalised learning curricula through the innovative use of educational technology to complement conventional methods of training and education. Some examples of these newer teaching methods include the use of eye tracker devices to understand the way students review and assess radiographs. With such devices, the students can be more effectively trained to read and interpret radiographs. Virtual learning environment and haptic technology will also be used to train students in the delivery of local anaesthesia, and in carrying out dental extractions and operative dental procedures. These technologies will also be used in the training of dental specialists, and delivery of advanced training for dentists in dental implantology and geriatric dentistry.

“Apart from such innovations in the delivery of dental education, the Faculty is planning to broaden the clinical exposure of its students beyond the clinics in NUCOHS. The students will have the opportunity to be posted to clinical settings in the community to learn more about the hands-on practice of primary care dentistry,” said Professor Patrick Finbarr Allen, Director, NUCOHS, and Dean, NUS Dentistry.

Housing the training facilities for OHTs also presents added opportunities for collaborative training between the Dental undergraduates from the Faculty and the OHTs students.



Increased collaborative multi-disciplinary research to promote good oral health

Dental disease remains highly prevalent. The co-location of research with clinical services and education will facilitate innovative thinking and collaboration. Some of the innovative research include regeneration of dental tissues using stem cells and development of SMART biomaterials to inhibit oral biofilms.

The multi-disciplinary research includes the ongoing work between researchers from the NUCOHS, NUH, NUS Yong Loo Lin School Medicine (NUS Medicine) and NUS Saw Swee Hock School of Public Health (NUS SSHSPH) to better understand the relationship between diabetes and periodontal (gum) disease in the population. NUCOHS' population health researchers, in collaboration with National Dental Centre Singapore, NUS SSHSPH and Duke-NUS Health Services Research, are working jointly on the national oral health survey. NUCOHS has established a primary care based research network to better understand the oral health issues.

“With NUCOHS as our nexus, it is going to change the whole concept of how we interact with our patients, students, researchers and the population at large. We will provide our patients with the highest quality care and services ranging from moderately complex care to advanced multi-disciplinary care and this will also be the place where we train our students to be the best clinicians to provide that level of care. With a responsibility towards population oral health, we will continue to spearhead research and work closely with the primary care to bring specialist oral care to the community,” said Professor Allen.

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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 includes the National University Hospital, Ng Teng Fong General Hospital, Jurong Community Hospital and Alexandra 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

About National University of Singapore (NUS)

The National University of Singapore (NUS) is Singapore's flagship university, which offers a global approach to education, research and entrepreneurship, with a focus on Asian perspectives and expertise. We have 17 faculties across three campuses in Singapore, as well as 12 NUS Overseas Colleges across the world. Close to 40,000 students from 100 countries enrich our vibrant and diverse campus community.

Our multidisciplinary and real-world approach to education, research and entrepreneurship enables us to work closely with industry, governments and academia to address crucial and complex issues relevant to Asia and the world. Researchers in our faculties, 29 university-level research institutes, research centres of excellence and corporate labs focus on themes that include energy, environmental and urban sustainability; treatment and prevention of diseases common among Asians; active ageing; advanced materials; as well as risk management and resilience of financial systems. Our latest research focus is on the use of data science, operations research and cybersecurity to support Singapore's Smart Nation initiative.



For more information on NUS, please visit www.nus.edu.sg.

About the National University Centre for Oral Health, Singapore (NUCOHS)

The National University Centre for Oral Health, Singapore (NUCOHS) is a national specialty centre that provides a comprehensive spectrum of dental care to manage oral, dental, and jaw-related conditions in patients across the lifespan. NUCOHS is also well poised to provide oral healthcare to the geriatric population as well as patients with special needs including those with complex medical conditions.

NUCOHS draws on the expertise of its clinicians and experts in the fields of Endodontics, Oral Maxillofacial Surgery, Orthodontics, Periodontics, Paediatric Dentistry and Prosthodontics, Geriatric Dentistry and Dental Public Health from the National University Hospital's (NUH) University Dental Cluster (UDC) and the National University of Singapore (NUS) Faculty of Dentistry to operate within NUHS under an academic health centre governance model. Its vision is to transform oral health in Singapore, nurture the next generation of oral health professionals, and champion impactful multi-disciplinary research in oral health.

NUCOHS is one of the three national centres, along with the National University Cancer Institute, Singapore (NCIS) and the National University Heart Centre, Singapore (NUHCS), which form an integral part of the National University Health System (NUHS) in meeting the evolving specialised healthcare needs of the population in Singapore.

For more information, please visit: www.nucohs.com.sg

ANNEX 1 - FACT SHEET

National University Centre for Oral Health, Singapore

Located at the Kent Ridge Campus, the National University Centre for Oral Health, Singapore (NUCOHS) is a one-stop national specialty centre that consolidates clinical services, education and research facilities in a single location.

NUCOHS provides comprehensive dental services spanning the clinical areas of Endodontics, Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery, Orthodontics, Paediatric Dentistry, Periodontics, and Prosthodontics for the general population. It also provides multidisciplinary specialist care for geriatric patients as well as those with special needs, and complex conditions.

In addition, the new building will cater to an increased annual undergraduate student intake to train more oral health professionals with an expanded teaching space, house the training of OHTs, and advanced simulation laboratories to promote leading-edge and experiential training and dental education.

Building Gross Floor Area:	About 34,000 sq metres of floor space
Number of Floors:	11-storeys and 1 basement floor
Clinical Facilities:	The facilities include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 86 Clinical Service Operatories (including 4 Special Needs and 2 Surgical Operatories) ▪ 150 Undergraduate/Graduate Training Operatories ▪ 26 Oral Health Therapist Training Operatories
Education Facilities:	The infrastructure will support the training and education of up to 400 undergraduates and postgraduates. Facilities include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Breakout Rooms located within the clinical service floors ▪ Tutorial/Seminar Rooms ▪ Lecture Theatre ▪ Prosthetic Laboratories ▪ Dental / Haptics Simulations Laboratories
Research Facilities:	Research Laboratories include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cariology ▪ Histology ▪ Microbiology ▪ Molecular Biology ▪ Tissue Culture
General Amenities:	217 public car park lots
Development Timeline:	September 2015 to January 2019
Current Patient Load:	500



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