

MEDIA RELEASE

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NATIONAL UNIVERSITY CANCER INSTITUTE, SINGAPORE TO GET NEW LEADER FROM 1 SEPTEMBER

Professor Chng Wee Joo steps down after nine years at the helm of one of Singapore's national cancer centres; appointed Vice-President for Biomedical Sciences Research at NUS

SINGAPORE — Adjunct Associate Professor Chee Cheng Ean will be the new director of the National University Cancer Institute, Singapore (NCIS) from 1 September 2023.

Adj A/Prof Chee, who has been the Deputy Director (Clinical) at NCIS since 1 April 2021, will be taking over the position from Professor Chng Wee Joo, who will relinquish his appointment on 1 September 2023 after holding office for nine years since 1 September 2014.

Prof Chng will be appointed Vice President (Biomedical Sciences Research) in the Office of the Deputy President (Research and Technology) at the National University of Singapore (NUS) from 1 September 2023.

He continues in his roles as Group Director at the National University Health System Research Office, Senior Principal Investigator at the NUS Cancer Science Institute of Singapore, as well as Executive Director of the Singapore Translational Cancer Consortium.

He will relinquish his role as Vice Dean of Research at NUS Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine from 1 January 2024.

On his successor, Prof Chng said: “Adj A/Prof Chee is committed to promoting positive people culture within NCIS. As Lead of the NCIS Transformation Office, she aspires to better align staff with the organisation’s vision for 2030 while advocating staff wellness and well-being. She has been driving clinical transformation in NCIS for the last few years.

“With her accomplishments, she is well-poised to build on our strong foundation and propel NCIS to greater heights.”

Taking over the baton

Adj A/Prof Chee’s leadership has been marked by successful initiatives to improve patient care and operations at NCIS, even amid COVID-19 challenges. One such initiative has enabled a procedure called abdominal paracentesis, which used to require hospitalisation, to be transitioned safely to the outpatient setting. The procedure involves drainage of ascites (excessive fluid from the abdomen) to relieve symptoms.

At least 700-bed days have been saved with the nurse-led ambulatory abdominal paracentesis service at the NCIS Short-Stay Ward and this service is now available to all NCIS patients. This initiative won NCIS the Excellence Award under the Patient Experience Improvement category of the Asian Hospital Management Awards in 2022.

Adj A/Prof Chee was also instrumental in establishing the NCIS Survivorship Programme, which focuses on follow-up care for cancer patients in the community. The programme aims to integrate and provide continuity of care for cancer survivors in the community they live in.

The programme, now known as the NCIS Follow-Up Cancer Care in the Community Programme, is available for selected breast and colorectal cancer patients who transition to community care after five years of cancer surveillance at NCIS. Patients have provided feedback that this initiative allowed greater convenience, with shorter wait time and reduced travelling costs. Likewise, NCIS bagged gold in the Asian Hospital Management Awards for this programme in 2019.

Adj A/Prof Chee, who is also Associate Professor of Medicine at NUS Medicine, specialises in colorectal, liver and pancreas cancers at NCIS. Her active involvement in clinical medicine and oncology, particularly in clinical trials, is complemented by her strong academic background as a grant-winning and widely published clinical investigator.

She said: “The strong foundation laid by Prof Chng has paved the way for the transformative work we do today in cancer care, research and education. I am dedicated to fostering an environment that nurtures creativity and embraces change. Together, we will leverage cutting-edge research, the latest technological advancements, and the power of multidisciplinary collaboration to drive us towards our vision for 2030.”

Prof Chng, as the Yong Loo Lin Professor in Medical Oncology, is an esteemed researcher in the fields of genomics, therapeutics and haematologic malignancies, with a wealth of experience spanning clinical practice, administration and leadership.

He has produced highly translational research – including using global genomic techniques to understand drug resistance and improve disease prognosis in haematological malignancies – that has helped to personalise treatments and improve patient outcomes. His impactful research has won him numerous national and global accolades.

Prof Chng played a key role in spearheading clinical innovations in NCIS such as outpatient autologous stem cell transplant, cancer care delivery in the community through the NCIS on the Go programme, as well as introducing innovative treatments such as cellular therapy. Under his tenure, NCIS attained world-class outcomes, particularly in stem cell transplants for blood cancers, lung cancer and urologic cancer.

Under his leadership, the NCIS clinical trials unit now handles more than 200 studies a year, up from 100 studies nine years ago.

Prof Chng is recognised as one of the top global experts in multiple myeloma – he is ranked among the top 0.076 per cent of 68,465 published authors worldwide on multiple myeloma by Expertscape. He holds the Ministry of Health’s National Medical

Research Council Senior Translational Research (STaR) Award, the highest tier of clinician-scientist awards, as well as the Mochtar Riady Pinnacle Award for Research Excellence.

Prof Chng said: “Moving forward, I will focus on strengthening research in NUHS by harnessing the power of all the schools and disciplines in the National University of Singapore and the clinical expertise in NUHS, to work together to solve problems in the health of the population we serve. There are many critical issues in healthcare as we start our Healthier SG journey. It is my belief that only through innovation and team-based multi-disciplinary research that we can find game-changing solutions and make the next leaps in improving health outcomes.”

Chinese Glossary

National University Health System (NUHS)	国立大学医学组织 (国大医学组织)
National University Cancer Institute, Singapore (NCIS)	新加坡国立大学癌症中心 (国大癌症中心)
National University of Singapore (NUS)	新加坡国立大学
NUS Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine (NUS Medicine)	新加坡国立大学杨潞龄医学院
NCIS Transformation Office	新加坡国立大学癌症中心转型办公室
NCIS Short-Stay Ward	新加坡国立大学癌症中心短期病房
NCIS Survivorship Programme	新加坡国立大学癌症中心生存计划
NCIS Follow-Up Cancer Care in the Community Programme	新加坡国立大学癌症中心社区癌症后续护理计划
Adjunct Associate Professor Chee Cheng Ean Director National University Cancer Institute, Singapore	徐清燕客座副教授 主任 新加坡国立大学癌症中心
Group Chief, Haematology-Oncology National University Health System	集团首席, 肿瘤血液科 国立大学医学组织
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About the National University Cancer Institute, Singapore

The National University Cancer Institute, Singapore (NCIS) is an academic, national specialist centre for cancer under the National University Health System (NUHS), and is the only public cancer centre in Singapore that treats both paediatric and adult cancers in one facility.

As one of two national cancer centres in Singapore, NCIS (*pronounced as “n-sis”*) offers a broad spectrum of cancer care and management from screening, diagnosis and treatment, to rehabilitation and survivorship, as well as palliative and long-term care. NCIS’ strength lies in the multi-disciplinary approach taken by our clinician-scientists and clinician-investigators to develop a comprehensive and personalised plan for each cancer patient.

NCIS provides the full suite of specialised oncology and haematology services at the NUH Medical Centre at Kent Ridge, Singapore, including those by the NCIS Chemotherapy Centre, NCIS Radiotherapy Centre and NCIS Cellular Therapy Centre.

NCIS also offers cancer services at other tertiary hospitals in Singapore:

- NCIS Cancer & Blood Clinic @ Ng Teng Fong General Hospital
- NCIS Radiotherapy Centre @ Tan Tock Seng Hospital
- NCIS Radiotherapy Clinic @ Khoo Teck Puat Hospital.

To bring cancer care even closer to our patients, our NCIS on the Go programme delivers a range of cancer services at clinics within the community for their convenience. For more information, please visit www.ncis.com.sg.