

MEDIA RELEASE

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NATIONAL HEART CENTRE SINGAPORE UNVEILS NEW BUILDING DESIGN AT ITS GROUNDBREAKING CEREMONY

The National Heart Centre Singapore breaks ground for its new building at its future site at Hospital Drive on 28 March 2009. The ceremony graced by Health Minister Khaw Boon Wan, together with some 150 guests from the healthcare fraternity, patients and staff, sees the centre unveil the design and plan for its new building.

Clinical Services – Optimal Care at the Best Value

A key focus area on the NHC new building centres on seamless care delivery. This includes centering care around the needs of patients and families; forming coordinated systems to deliver effective and appropriate care to patients, and developing and supporting care models that include defined care coordinators for patients with chronic and acute conditions.

To meet current workload and in anticipation of rising demand with a rapidly ageing population, NHC will increase the number of clinics by three-fold. The centre will also be setting up day surgery facilities at the new building to provide a holistic and seamless care by consolidating the services under one roof. By further addressing right site of care, patients can expect a lower hospitalisation bill due to a shorter hospital day. This will help them to stretch their healthcare dollar.

To provide greater ease and convenience to patients, the centre has also planned to introduce self-registration kiosks. On the day of the appointment, the patient simply scans his appointment card at the self-registration kiosk and a queue ticket will direct him to the consultation room or lab for the diagnostic tests.

Patients can also look forward to a one-stop payment system. This will save them the hassle of taking out their wallets more than once and cut down time spent on queuing. Self-payment kiosks, electronic payments and health monitoring kiosks are also in the pipeline.

To help patients take charge of their heart health, the new building will add a health information library to facilitate them to learn about specific heart diseases or conditions and healthy living.

Teaching – Grooming a Proficient Workforce for Cardiovascular Medicine

On the teaching front, the new NHC will continue to strengthen its status as the preferred cardiovascular training centre through training an increasing pool of qualified doctors, nurses and allied healthcare workers in cardiovascular medicine to meet the rising expectations of patients and to serve the rapidly ageing population.

Research – A Beacon of Hope for Singaporeans

Research facilities currently being sited out off the main building due to space constraints will be housed at the new building. The plan to co-locate service and research will enhance interaction between researchers and clinicians, creating a vibrant academic medical environment that promotes the translation of research into clinical services that can improve the diagnosis, treatment and cure for the patients. The centre will also intensify its collaborations with the Duke-NUS Graduate Medical School to strengthen cardiovascular research on the Outram Campus in the next decade.

Digital Heart Hospital

Setting sights on being a *Digital Heart Hospital*, the new NHC building will harness the prolific use of information technology (IT) to dramatically improve the processes and outcomes of care.

Electronic clinical orders, saving time and eliminating errors

This include the Computerised Physician's Order Entry (CPOE) system, a cluster-wide initiative by SingHealth, which allows doctors to place clinical orders such as radiology or laboratory tests and outpatient medication prescriptions electronically, via customised clinical order sets. This will save them the hassle of filling up tedious physical order forms, providing them ease and speed in consultation. More importantly, the system reduces errors associated with illegible handwriting and built-in decision support mechanisms allow pharmacists and nurse to cross-check the orders.

Structured Notes Documentation

The centre will move from the conventional paper clinical notes to an electronic-structured clinical documentation. With data entered electronically, it eliminates the need for paper notes and reminders. This improves accuracy and readability and outcomes can be tracked for decision support to improve clinical care continually.

Sharing knowledge across borders with telemedicine

To enable our doctors to meet, confer and share knowledge, across borders, the new NHC will leverage on telemedicine with digital imaging capabilities. The centre is also gearing towards a paperless environment to enhance productivity and patient safety while being environmentally friendly as well.

“Placing People First” Design Philosophy

The patient-centric focus is also reflected in the new building design. Jointly designed by Ong & Ong and Broadway Malyan, the inspirational concept of the NHC new building was drawn from the “Placing People First” philosophy. It encompasses the needs of the various key users – the patient, the visitor and the staff.

Unique two fronts - institutional and garden

A distinctive feature is its two fronts - institutional and garden. The institutional front, the main approach for vehicles and houses the medical facilities, is quiet and formal. The garden front, at the other end, faces the garden deck in the Outram Campus Masterplan. This serves primarily as the healing park and waiting area. The first and second storey will allow direct passage by the public from the institutional front to the garden deck, to promote integrated access to other facilities within the Campus.

Eco-friendly features, saving energy and reducing wastage

The new building will adopt various green building features, technologies and innovations to achieve better performance in energy efficiency, water usage, use of recycled and reusable materials, indoor environmental quality and environmental management. Examples include the passive solar strategy for the institutional front, which reduces heat emission and direct glare and sunlight into the building while introducing diffuse daylight condition and cutting overall energy consumption; and the use of environmental friendly building elements which are energy efficient in fabrication, self-cleansing and long-lasting. The use of sustainable construction defines a green benchmark for healthcare design in South-East Asia.

Ease of navigation and flexibility in space planning

With the 'Placing People First' concept in mind, the new building introduces intuitive wayfinding, with most facilities visible from the main reception, bringing ease and convenience to the patients and visitors.

The rectilinear building form provides great flexibility in space planning, reconfiguration of usage and ease of extension upwards and sideways. To facilitate ease and speed of construction, modern methods of modularisation will be utilised.

The 12-level building of 35,000 square metres will complete by end 2012, and operational in early 2013.

Associate Professor Koh Tian Hai, Medical Director, National Heart Centre Singapore said, "In designing the new NHC building, we consider every facet of the heart patient's care and hospital experience, to deliver the best care possible while balancing cost and functional effectiveness. We will work towards improving our processes and outcomes of care through harnessing information technology. On teaching and research fronts, we will continue to work closely with local and overseas institutions to groom a proficient cardiovascular workforce and to promote the translation of research into clinical services that can improve the diagnosis, treatment and cure for the patients."

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About the National Heart Centre Singapore

The National Heart Centre Singapore (NHC) is a 185-bed national and regional referral centre for cardiovascular diseases. A one-stop facility with the largest heart specialists group in Singapore, NHC treats complex cases and sees the highest volume of heart patients locally.

Each year, we handle over 90,000 outpatient consultations, 6,000 interventional and surgical procedures and 9,000 inpatients. Our outcomes for heart attack treatment, balloon angioplasty with stenting and bypass surgery have been shown to be equivalent to international standards.

NHC is the first heart centre outside USA and in Asia to receive the prestigious Joint Commission International (JCI) since 2005, which is an assurance for safe and quality patient care for our patients.