



## PRESS RELEASE

21 OCTOBER 2017 | FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **NUS Medicine students provide free health and dental screening services in Jurong**

***New screening components include mental health screening for dementia and depression for people age 60 years old and above and a social support booth***

*Singapore, 21 October 2017* — About 1,500 Singaporeans and Permanent Residents age 40 years old and above will be screened for frailty, mental and oral health as well as chronic illnesses like cardiovascular disease and various cancers, at a free comprehensive health screening on 21 and 22 October 2017.

Organised by students of NUS Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine (NUS Medicine), and involving their fellow students from Nursing, Pharmacy, Dentistry and Social Work, Nanyang Technological University's Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine, Duke-NUS Medical School, as well as volunteer doctors, the annual Public Health Service (PHS) aims to promote good community health through preventive measures, and spread awareness of the need and ways of looking after one's health through education programmes.

Into its 12<sup>th</sup> year, the PHS has benefited more than 17,000 residents in neighbourhoods such as Toa Payoh and Clementi since 2004.

Starting with four screening components, the health screening has since expanded its scope to include geriatric screening and mental health in recent years. This year, the new screening modalities include mental health screening for dementia and depression for people age 60 years old and above, as well as consultation and registration for social support services to residents in need of financial help.

“Over the past few years, we have found out that it is not enough to screen for purely physical ailments. Mental health is a huge component of healthcare, which affects a person's physical health and his ability and willingness to keep healthy, and it also inflicts stress on caregivers as well. Dementia and depression are increasingly recognized as huge healthcare problems among the elderly. This should be detected early so that timely management can be implemented,” said Ms Sarah Tham, Co-director of PHS 2017.

“We hope that our screening exercise this year is comprehensive enough to cover the various aspects of health – not just physical health, but also mental and socio-economic health,” she added.

In a move to be more inclusive to persons with disabilities, PHS 2017 is wheelchair-friendly for the first time, and the event also provides volunteer support for persons with disabilities, and sign language translation services for the deaf.

“Promoting health, spreading awareness – this is essentially what we aim to do. We hope that through our education efforts, health screening and follow-up, we can play our part in encouraging health-seeking behaviours, one community at a time,” said Ms Tham.

In recent years, PHS has also strengthened its follow-up processes, by working with primary care providers from the National University Health System’s partner clinics in the Jurong area to provide free first consultations to identified participants with abnormal blood test and blood pressure results. Volunteers in the “Telehealth programme” subsequently call participants to encourage them to attend the free consultations.

In addition to secondary prevention (preventing the progression of disease) through the health screening, PHS has evolved to champion primary prevention (preventing the onset of disease) through health education.

In line with the War on Diabetes, volunteers conduct door-to-door education on diabetes for residents. And through school assembly talks and mentorship programmes, the PHS’ Young Health Ambassadors’ Programme (YHAP) also seeks to empower youths to become health ambassadors, who can promote healthy lifestyle changes in their families and communities.

“The Public Health Service is a student-led initiative that helps to nurture competent, compassionate, creative, community-responsive and innovative doctors and nurses as well as allied health professionals of tomorrow. The services provided also enable the students to apply the skills they have learnt with competence to help residents in maintaining and improving their health,” said Associate Professor Lau Tang Ching, Vice-Dean for Education at NUS Medicine.

The event was launched by Associate Professor Benjamin Ong, Director of Medical Services at the Ministry of Health on 21 October 2017.

---

For media enquiries, please contact:

WANG Simin  
Assistant Manager  
Dean’s Office, Corporate Communications  
NUS Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine  
DID: +65 6772 7804  
Mobile: +65 9625 3710  
Email: [wangsimin@nus.edu.sg](mailto:wangsimin@nus.edu.sg)

## **About the National University of Singapore (NUS)**

A leading global university centred in Asia, the National University of Singapore (NUS) is Singapore's flagship university, which offers a global approach to education and research, with a focus on Asian perspectives and expertise.

NUS has 17 faculties and schools across three campuses. Its transformative education includes a broad-based curriculum underscored by multidisciplinary courses and cross-faculty enrichment. Over 38,000 students from 100 countries enrich the community with their diverse social and cultural perspectives. NUS also strives to create a supportive and innovative environment to promote creative enterprise within its community.

NUS takes an integrated and multidisciplinary approach to research, working with partners from industry, government and academia, to address crucial and complex issues relevant to Asia and the world. Researchers in NUS' Schools and Faculties, 30 university-level research institutes and centres, and Research Centres of Excellence cover a wide range of themes including: energy, environmental and urban sustainability; treatment and prevention of diseases common among Asians; active ageing; advanced materials; risk management and resilience of financial systems. The University's latest research focus is to use data science, operations research and cybersecurity to support Singapore's Smart Nation initiative.

For more information on NUS, please visit [www.nus.edu.sg](http://www.nus.edu.sg).

## **About the NUS Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine (NUS Medicine)**

Established in 1905, the NUS Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine is the first institution of higher learning in Singapore and the genesis of the National University of Singapore.

The School offers one of the finest undergraduate medical programmes in the Asia Pacific region and commands international recognition and respect. The Times Higher Education World University Rankings 2016 by subject and Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) World University Rankings by Subject 2017 list NUS Medicine as a leading medical school in Asia.

It admits 300 students to the MBBS degree programme annually and its principal missions are to educate and train the next generation of healthcare professionals, and foster research that will help to advance the practice of medicine.

The 18 NUS Medicine departments in the basic sciences and clinical specialties work closely with the Centre for Medical Education, the Centre for Biomedical Ethics, the Centre for Healthcare Simulation as well as the restructured public hospitals to ensure that teaching and research are aligned and relevant to Singapore's healthcare needs. The School is a founding institutional member of the National University Health System.

For more information about NUS Medicine, please visit <http://nusmedicine.nus.edu.sg>.

## **PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE 2017: FACT SHEET**

### **PHS 2017 Screening Modalities and Exhibition Site**

1. Cardiovascular Screening
  - Diabetes mellitus and dyslipidemia screening: phlebotomy
  - Hypertension screening: blood pressure measurement
  - Body Mass Index (BMI)
2. History Taking
  - Past Medical History
  - Urinary Incontinence screening
3. Cancer Screening
  - Colon cancer screening (only  $\geq 50$  yrs are eligible): free Faecal Immunochemical Test kits
  - Breast and cervical cancer screening: awareness and education, registration for mammogram (only  $\geq 50$  yrs are eligible) and pap smear
4. Geriatrics Screening (only  $\geq 60$  yrs are eligible)
  - Visual acuity screening
  - Fall risk and frailty assessment
  - Mental health screening for dementia and depression
  - Physiotherapist and Occupational Therapist consult
5. Oral Health Screening
  - Awareness, education and basic screening for oral health
6. Follow-up
  - Free on-site consultation by doctors
  - Follow-up booth
7. Exhibition Site
  - Exhibition Booths: aimed at health promotion
  - Social Support Booth: consultation and registration for support services
  - Health quiz with lucky draw prizes to be won

### **PHS 2017 Volunteers**

Total number of healthcare volunteers (excluding exhibition and screening Partners): 656

- Medical volunteers:
  - NUS Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine: 310
  - NTU Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine: 65
  - Duke-NUS Medical School: 6

- Nursing volunteers (NUS): 119
- Pharmacy volunteers (NUS): 87
- Dentistry volunteers (NUS): about 40
- Medical social work volunteers (NUS): 1
- Doctors: 28

### **PHS 2017 Partners**

#### Screening

- Jurong-Clementi Town Council
- National University Cancer Institute, Singapore
- National University Hospital, Department of Laboratory Medicine
- National University Hospital, G-RACE
- National University of Singapore, Faculty of Dentistry
- People's Association
- Singapore Cancer Society
- Singapore Association of Occupational Therapy
- Singapore Physiotherapy Association
- Yuhua Community Centre

#### Exhibition

- ActiveSG
- Agency of Integrated Care
- Alzheimer's Disease Association
- Feiyue Community Resource, Engagement and Support Team (CREST)
- Health Promotion Board
- Hwa Chong Institution
- National Heart Centre Singapore
- National Kidney Foundation
- Podiatry Association (Singapore)
- Raffles Institution
- The Association of Diabetes Educators of Singapore

### **PHS 2017 Sponsors**

- Goh Keng Swee Foundation
- Hong Leong Foundation
- Ministry of Health Holdings
- National University Health Services Group Pte Ltd
- National University of Singapore, Community Engagement Fund

- National University of Singapore, Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine, GoHelp
- National University of Singapore, Interprofessional Education Fund
- OUE Ltd
- People's Association Youth Movement Fund
- PSA Corporations Ltd
- SMA Charity Fund
- Southwest Community Development Council
- Tote Board Community Healthcare Fund
- Bizzz Coolers
- Bud of Joy Bakery and Store
- Garden Picks
- Gold Roast
- Haw Par Healthcare
- Hisamitsu
- Honsei
- Julie's
- National University of Singapore, Medical Society
- Pearl's Optical
- Pere Ocean
- REL Systems
- Singapore Heart Foundation
- Singapore Mass Rapid Transit (SMRT) Media
- The ABLE Studio
- XCO Media
- Yakult

### **Key Statistics from PHS 2016**

In 2016, PHS organised two major events – the Young Health Ambassadors' Programme (YHAP) targeted at secondary school and junior college students, and a health screening that took place in Clementi Central on 7-8 October 2016 for all Singaporeans and Singapore Permanent Residents aged 40 years old and above.

#### **Young Health Ambassadors' Programme (YHAP)**

- Reached out to more than 2,300 secondary school and junior college students
- 7 health assembly talks given at 3 schools: Anglo Chinese School (Independent), Choa Chu Kang Secondary School, and Crescent Girls' School
- Through the pre-talk and post-talk surveys
  - 75.6% improvement in health knowledge scores
  - 94.0% of students either agreed or strongly agreed to the belief in regular health screenings after the talk
- 25 Hwa Chong Junior College students in the YHAP programme put up posters on various cancers at the exhibition station at PHS 2016

#### **Health Screening and Exhibition**

Participants

- Screened 1,361 participants:
  - 91% Chinese, 4% Malay, 3% Indian, and 2% others
  - 63% female, 37% male (F/M ratio = 1.73)
  - 90.4% Singaporeans, 9.6% Permanent Residents
  - 52.2% aged 60 and above
  - Among those who disclosed their income levels (842 participants), 76.6% had a monthly per capita household income of \$1,800 and less, with 45.3% of those surveyed receiving some form of financial assistance

#### Volunteers

- 843 volunteers were involved in the screening event, providing a total of 6,994 volunteer hours

#### Follow-up

- 42.7% of all screening participants were found to have abnormalities in at least one of the following areas related to cardiovascular health: body mass index, blood pressure, fasting blood glucose, fasting blood lipids
- 33.3% of all screening participants required further primary medical care:
  - All were called and encouraged to visit a primary care physician, through the Telehealth initiative
  - 49.2% were newly found to have abnormal blood test results and/or hypertension. All these participants were given a first free doctor's consult at any one of PHS' 52 partner primary care providers (PCPs).
  - 63.8% of participants who were given a first free doctor's consultation have seen or are intending to see a doctor in the near future based on preliminary self-reported visit actualisation rates as of December 2016
- Cancer screening:
  - Faecal Immunochemical Test (FIT) kits were given to 589 participants: 67.4% of these sets were returned to Singapore Cancer Society (SCS), with 5.04% having at least one sample tested positive for occult blood in stools and who were referred for a doctor's review under SCS' recommendation
  - 170 female participants registered for Pap smears to test for cervical cancer
  - 112 participants registered for mammograms to test for breast cancer