MORE MID-CAREER PROFESSIONALS SWITCH TO NURSING

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For immediate release

More mid-career Singaporeans are becoming nurses through the Healthcare Professional Conversion Programme (PCP). In 2016, six professionals took up PCP and joined the National Healthcare Group (NHG), up from just one in 2011. Those who joined had previously held jobs in engineering, education and customer service industries. What attracted them to nursing was a growing healthcare sector with structured career advancement pathways, better training opportunities and competitive salaries. Since 2011, NHG has trained 17 mid-career professionals to become registered nurses.

PCP supports mid-career workers to be retrained as registered and enrolled nurses, physiotherapists and occupational therapists, diagnostic radiographers and dental surgery assistants. This programme is jointly administered by the Ministry of Health (MOH) and Workforce Singapore (WSG).

Ms Rachel Wu, 33, Staff Nurse II from National Healthcare Group Polyclinics (NHGP) made a mid-career switch to nursing in July this year after finishing her Diploma in Nursing from Nanyang Polytechnic. Previously a home-based translator, she was inspired by her children to fulfill her childhood dream of becoming a nurse, having participated in the St John’s Ambulance Brigade during her school days. On her passion for nursing, Ms Wu said, “I have been trained professionally through the multiple career opportunities provided for nurses in Primary Care. Nursing is satisfying as I learn something new every day from patients and peers.”

Mr Yong Keng Kwang, Chief Nurse at Tan Tock Seng Hospital (TTSH) said, “The increasing number of professionals joining NHG through PCP represents a growing interest in the nursing profession. Nurses comprise the largest segment of healthcare professionals in Singapore and are instrumental in helping to shape our healthcare transformation landscape. Across NHG, we have over 5,000 nurses working in acute hospitals, Primary Care, National Specialty Centres, community hospitals, and in health-related settings. I am heartened that more locals recognise the wide career and training opportunities available, and are making a difference to the lives of Singaporeans.”
Potential for Advancement

At NHG, career paths for nurses are well mapped out. They can choose from four tracks: clinical, education, research and management (see Annex). Structured training and mentoring programmes are available to facilitate their growth. Nurses can pursue an Advanced Practice Nurse (APN) qualification. APNs are registered nurses who have a Master’s Degree in Nursing and are trained in the diagnosis and management of common medical conditions. They collaborate with doctors and Allied Health Professionals to deliver advanced nursing care and treatment for patients. The role of the APN encompasses patient and peer education, mentorship, clinical leadership, and the responsibility to translate, utilise and undertake meaningful research to advance and improve holistic nursing practice and policies.

In NHG, more nurses are pursuing post-graduate degrees. Over the past five years from 2011 to 2016, nurses with Master’s or Doctorate Degrees in Nursing grew from two to 72.

For example, Ms Tay Jing Ling, 29, is an Advanced Practice Nurse (APN) from the Institute of Mental Health (IMH). She pursued a Master’s Degree in Nursing from 2012 and now works in an acute Psychiatry Inpatient Ward at IMH. She draws up care plans with psychiatrists and psychologists to ensure successful discharge of patients into the community. She also runs an APN-led clinic to follow up with the patients in the outpatient setting. She said, “I enjoy helping patients with customised care plans to enable them to lead better quality lives.”

At NHG, we are pleased with the advancement in Nursing Care and Education, and thank all our nurses for contributing to Adding Years of Healthy Life for Singaporeans.

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About the National Healthcare Group

The National Healthcare Group (NHG) is a leader in public healthcare in Singapore, recognised at home and abroad for the quality of its medical expertise and facilities. Care is provided through an integrated network of nine primary healthcare polyclinics, acute care and tertiary hospitals, national specialty centres and business divisions. Together they bring a rich legacy of medical expertise to our philosophy of integrated patient-centred care. NHG’s vision is “Adding Years of Healthy Life”. This vision goes beyond merely healing the sick to the more difficult and infinitely more rewarding task of preventing illness and preserving health and quality of life. With some 13,000 staff, NHG aims to provide care that is patient-centric, accessible, seamless, comprehensive, appropriate and cost-effective. As the Regional Health System (RHS) for Central Singapore, it is vital for NHG to partner and collaborate with stakeholders, community advisors, and voluntary welfare organisations. Together with our patients, their families and caregivers, we aim to deliver integrated healthcare services and programmes that help in Adding Years of Healthy Life to all concerned. More information is available at www.nhg.com.sg.

ANNEX