



## **PAYA LEBAR METHODIST GIRLS' SCHOOL AND NATIONAL HEALTHCARE GROUP JOIN FORCES TO IMPROVE SCHOOL HEALTH**

**24 April 2019**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **A whole school approach to health**

Students from Paya Lebar Methodist Girls' School (Secondary) (PLMGS(S)) are collaborating with the National Healthcare Group (NHG) to drive a novel whole school strategy to inculcate healthy living from a young age. A first between a public healthcare cluster and a school, the partnership between NHG and PLMGS aims to get all 1,300 students, teachers and staff to reduce sugar intake and increase physical activity.

The ongoing health promotion campaign, which was launched in January 2019, adopts a multi-faceted approach to raise awareness on sugar levels found in food and beverages commonly sold in the school's cafeteria, as well as to advocate the importance of physical activity. This includes circulating a series of educational cartoons, featuring the official campaign mascot ('P.E.Z'), to students and staff, as well as parents, through email and other multi-media platforms. Educational talks conducted by healthcare professionals for parents are also being planned later this year.

To spur the practice of healthy habits in everyday life, students participated in a cooking competition where they created sugar-free recipes, and took part in an Inter-House Drinks Challenge where they were encouraged to consume reduced-sugar beverages containing less than 5.5 grams of sugar.

NHG also partnered non-profit organisation Care Singapore (CareSG) to train a group of students to be 'Health Ambassadors'. These students were taught communication skills to help them initiate meaningful dialogues about health with their peers. To date, CareSG has trained about 30 'Health Ambassadors' in PLMGS(S).

### **Students embrace healthier options**

The campaign has seen promising results. Since its launch, the school has observed the following outcomes:

- About 10 per cent increase in the sale of low or reduced sugar beverages between February and April 2019, as compared with the same period in 2018. This includes beverages containing less than six grams of sugar, and bottled water.
- Students started to request more ice in their drinks, in an effort to reduce sweetness.
- The school canteen vendor observed two to three new students switching to low or no sugar beverages per week.

**Mrs Quek Li Gek, Principal of PLMGS(S)** said, "The campaign rallies together the school community, students, staff and parents, and encourages all to make healthy lifestyle choices in our everyday living. It provides opportunities for the health ambassadors and sports leaders to be both

hands-on and minds-on in helping to modify behaviours and promote health. Students involved in the development of the campaigns see themselves as change-makers. It has been a privilege to partner NHG in this effort, which has strengthened the girls' commitment to leading healthy lifestyles and being influencers in this area.”

**Dr Audrey Tan, Senior Consultant, Population Health, National Healthcare Group**, said, “Partnering with PLMGS(S) enables us to leverage on the school’s strengths and abilities to co-create a campaign that is relevant and appropriate for the students and staff. There is also better integration into the school’s existing initiatives to promote health education.”

She added, “Embracing healthy habits from young is important because it not only reduces the risk of health problems later on in life, it is also harder to modify behaviours once youths develop certain lifestyle habits when they grow older. A healthier and fitter lifestyle translates into higher energy levels, which will help students perform better in school.”

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**About 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 six primary care polyclinics, acute care and tertiary hospitals, national speciality 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 18,000 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](http://www.nhg.com.sg)

**About Paya Lebar Methodist Girls School (Secondary)**

Paya Lebar Methodist Girls’ School (Secondary) is a mission school blessed with a strong culture of excellence in raising girls. Grounded in deep values, the girls develop holistically in an environment that emphasises character and performance excellence. Anchoring on the belief that every girl

matters, we teach to the minds of girls and leverage on the benefits of an all-girls education to promote each girls' confidence and resilience. We invest our efforts into maximising each girls' potential to equip them to be ready for the future.

#### CHINESE GLOSSARY

National Healthcare Group	国立健保集团
Paya Lebar Methodist Girls' School (Secondary)	巴耶礼峇美以美女校 (中学)
Dr Audrey Tan Senior Consultant Population Health	陈淑琳医生 高级顾问医生 国民保健
Mrs Quek Li Gek Principal	谢丽玉女士 校长
Health Ambassador	健康大使