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NHG Career Day 2024: A Pathway for Everyone

FACE-TO-FACE



Knowing the Community You Grow and Serve In

VOICES



Fostering Progressive Leadership

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NHG Teachers' Day 2024: Nurturing. Empowering. Inspiring.



NHG Career Day 2024: A Pathway for Everyone

More than 400 participants filled the halls and corridors of CHI the Ng Teng Fong Centre for Healthcare Innovation at the annual National Healthcare Group (NHG) Career Day on 13 July 2024, to learn more about the medical career opportunities offered in NHG.

Medical students and junior doctors have plenty of career pathways to explore. Each caters to different interests and career aspirations ranging from specialist (residency) and non-specialist pathways such as the hospital clinician scheme and resident physician, to research and innovation opportunities such as clinician scientist pathway and clinician innovator to name a few.

Talks by NHG senior management and hospital leadership provided the participants with a better understanding not just the different career pathways in healthcare, but also the training culture within NHG.

“(We are known for our) kampung spirit. It is actually how we relate to one another, how we fight together, work through difficulties, and also celebrate those times together,” shared Professor Joe Sim, Group Chief Executive Officer, NHG, during the ‘Careers in NHG’ segment.



Residents and programme directors stood by their respective booths to answer the attendees' burning questions

“(We are known for our) kampung spirit. It is actually how we relate to one another, how we fight together, work through difficulties, and also celebrate those times together.”

- Prof Joe Sim



"Over here (NHG), I find the joy of working together... (you will notice that) the support of the senior clinicians all the way to the administration are all passionate.

"(And) we have quite a strong training culture."

Prof Sim cited NHG's latest addition, Woodlands Health (WH) and its Chairman Medical Board, Associate Professor Nicholas Chew as an example. As the previous Designated Institutional Official (DIO) of NHG Residency, and NHG Chief Education Officer, A/Prof Chew spearheaded various education-related initiatives (which are still ongoing) and fostered an education-centric culture. This "same culture, and level of enthusiasm for learners" can also be observed at WH, where A/Prof Chew played a crucial role in its establishment, said Prof Sim.

A/Prof Chew who was one of the panelists shared, that while specialists careers are important, there is a shift in mindset for non-specialist physicians in the areas of career development and leadership opportunities.

"The concept that you can only be leader if you are a specialist is from a past generation. And that has grossly changed now," he said.

"We are moving towards institutions where non-specialists can take up leadership roles within the organisation.

"We already have some individuals who are not specialists, and are taking leadership roles within our institutions... and we do want to create career tracks for our professionals to be part of this journey, and to grow with us in a career that will be lifelong."

One such non-specialist track is the Hospital Clinician Scheme (HCS), which is the brainchild of A/Prof Chew. Recognising the vital role that non-specialists play towards the long-term growth of the organisation and that not all physicians aspire to become a specialist, A/Prof Chew and his team created the HCS to provide a more structured career pathway for non-specialists.

"We want our non-specialist hospital physicians to be the anchors in our wards, so that they can independently run a ward round with a junior staff, and elevate themselves in terms of their clinical skills and decisions that they can make on their own," A/Prof Chew shared.

With many opportunities available, Dr Llewellyn Lee (current DIO of NHG Residency) advised the participants to take their time to explore the various pathways.

"Your period of exploration is very important," he said.

"Even if it takes you six months, one year, two years... to decide what you want, and what you are suitable for, it's nothing compared to your entire career, which is going to be like 30 to 40 years."



Attendees had hands-on opportunities at the various programme booths

[Click here](#) for NHG Career Day 2024 photos.

NHG Resident Induction 2024: Knowing the Community You Grow and Serve In

This year, newly-minted residents commencing their residency training at National Healthcare Group (NHG), experienced a slightly different induction programme, spanning across two days of engagement and team-building activities.

The 130 new residents along with faculty and senior education leadership spent a Saturday morning in July interacting and mingling with youths from Boys' Town; and on Sunday, bonding with each other through various obstacle courses and games at Sentosa.

Traditionally, new residents participate in community engagement activities such as visiting seniors, migrant workers or disadvantaged children, as part of NHG Residency's orientation.

"Every year we visit different communities because I think it's very important for us to remember and realise why we do what we do," shared Dr Llewellyn Lee, Designated Institutional Official, NHG Residency, during the debrief segment at Boys' Town. He added that the aim is to provide the new residents with a different lens of the community that they serve, and to better understand the community from a socio-psychological perspective, and ultimately to see the patients as people and not as ailment(s) to be treated.

"Don't forget the person, the patient in front of you is actually someone's grandma, granddad, father," said Dr Lee.

"I encourage all of you to step up, because there are many communities of need, and I hope that you will all step up so that these needs would be met," said Associate Professor Michelle Jong, Group Chief Clinical Education Officer, NHG.

And this year, a team-building component was included as part of the induction programme to provide new residents with the platform and opportunity to get to know fellow residents across different specialties and institutions.



A slew of team games, 'missions', and activities were organised for the youths and residents



160-strong residents, faculty, and senior leadership thronged Boys' Town at this year's NHG Residency Community Engagement Day

Joined by residency faculty and NHG leadership, the new residents were put through various team challenges such as solving puzzles, physical challenges, and even a 'real-life' Monopoly challenge (using Sentosa as the game board) to not only test the teams' wit, but to bring work-life lessons such as interdependence, managing priorities, collaborations, and acknowledging each other's unique strengths to the fore.

"I wish I had such an event as a trainee (in the past), but we never had. And this really brings together everyone in the community because this is what we need going ahead," shared Adjunct Professor Tang Kong Choong, Chief Executive Officer, Tan Tock Seng Hospital (TTSH), who joined one of the resident teams.

Reflecting on the activities, Prof Tang shared that many lessons and parallels could be drawn from it.

"If you are going to fall, you know that someone is holding you or will be watching your back," he said referencing the wire-balancing challenge.

"And this is what I think we want people to do. Because going ahead, the challenges for healthcare is going to be great. It's going to be challenging, it's going to be tough," he added.

"This really brings together everyone in the community because this is what we need going ahead."

- Adj Prof Tang Kong Choong



Sentosa became the 'life-sized' Monopoly board

"(Sometimes) you'll need to stretch... to reach that pillar... so that the team can get through the night or the week.

"I just hope that this session will bring you all closer together. To build a strong sense of camaraderie, the strong sense of team. I think that is what we want to achieve for all of you."

In his closing address, Dr Llewellyn Lee, shared that the most rewarding aspect of the team-bonding session was to see the residents interacting like old friends.

"Sitting (and watching from) the back this morning, everyone was very quiet. Conversations and interactions were very forced. But in this last session, I think Berwin (facilitator) couldn't stop you guys from talking because everyone was chatting away."

"So I think, the goal of today has really been met. I think that's really cool to form lasting friendships.

"(And) If you remember this person from today, then in the future when you need help (in the hospital), you'll just call them, and they will just say yes to you," he quipped, to laughter in the room.



Prof Chin (centre, left) received the scroll with the inscription 桃李满天下、绿野追唐裴 from Prof Sim, on behalf of NHG's clinical educator community

NHG Teachers' Day 2024: Nurturing. Empowering. Inspiring.



Ms Shalimar Ramirez was one of the recipients of the inaugural NHG Star Award for Senior Education Administrators

More than 300 awardees, supporters, and senior leadership from National Healthcare Group (NHG) jammed packed the Centre for Healthcare Innovation to celebrate NHG's 4,000 clinical educators at this year's NHG Teachers' Day, held on 12 Sept 2024.

293 clinical educators and partners of NHG were honoured for their outstanding performance and efforts in training and educating students, learners, and junior healthcare professionals.

Guest of honour, Professor Joe Sim, Group Chief Executive Officer (NHG), expressed his thanks and appreciation to the awardees in his opening address.

"I cannot emphasise how important the role you play in NHG," he said.

"Your work in education will shape the future of NHG... many of the things that you teach the learners now... when you prepare them for the (clinical) competencies, the skills, and the mindset, are not only needed today, but also tomorrow. These are very important, as it equips us to serve our patients and our population better."

Citing a Chinese proverb "桃李满天下" ("the cultivation of talented students all over the world, who are bearing fruit and bringing goodness to mankind"), Prof Sim said: "The work that you do as a teacher is not just benefitting the current generation or even the generation after that, it is actually many many generations after that.

"What's unique about healthcare is that it's all about apprenticeship, and this requires a very close relationship between the one who's teaching and the one who's learning."

- Prof Chin Jing Jih

"And I really want to emphasise the impact that you have is not just the immediate past, but you are actually affecting the entire DNA of NHG."

Two new awards were also unveiled by Prof Sim at the ceremony to recognise education administrators who demonstrate administrative excellence in the support and delivery of quality clinical education in NHG, and the advancement of the education mission.

"Administrators, you may think that you do not play an important role, because you are not teaching... but what you do makes teaching easy (for the clinical educators)," he said while recounting how the support that universities' administrators enabled him to focus on teaching as an MBA lecturer.

"What's unique about healthcare is that it's all about apprenticeship, and this requires a very close relationship between the one who's teaching and the one who's learning," said Professor Chin Jing Jih, Deputy GCEO (Clinical and Academic Development), NHG, in his closing address.

"We (NHG) understand that teaching is important, it is essential. Therefore, we have set aside funding and system to make sure that some of us who have that penchant and passion for teaching, are able to teach systematically and be more efficient and productive."

Prof Chin stressed that while the transmission of clinical skills and knowledge is essential in healthcare, it is equally important for

educators to engage their learners, and for learners to engage the community that they serve.

"I think it's important for us to understand not just what the learners need, but how they think, how they approach problems and to try to help them to understand. It has to be a learner-centric sort of system rather than teacher-centric," he said.

Prof Chin also urged for both educators and learners to strengthen inter-generational cohesion.

"(In) a situation where the juniors find that they can't communicate with the senior can be a big issue," he said.

"There needs to be a lot of communication, (and) a lot of empathy between the generations so that we can understand one another... (to make) this apprenticeship a fruitful and successful one."

In closing, Prof Chin expressed his gratitude and congratulations to all the awardees, adding that the celebration is culmination and combination of a lot of hard work and 'heart' work that the awardees and clinical educators have put in over the years.

"As the Chinese saying goes, "十年树木，百年树人"; (when) you cultivate a tree it takes ten years, but when you want to cultivate people, human resource, it can be a very long time, but the rewards are fantastic," he said.



[For the full list of awardees, please click here](#)

293 clinical educators were honoured at this year's NHG Teachers' Day



Chief Resident Induction Programme: Fostering Progressive Relationships

Leadership development has always been the cornerstone of the National Healthcare Group Residency's Chief Resident (CR) Induction Programme.

This year's 36 new CRs had the privilege of working through a simulation exercise designed by guest speaker, Dr Janil Puthuchear, Senior Minister of State, Ministry of Digital Development and Information & Ministry of Health; as well as interacted and gained insights on leadership from current healthcare leaders in NHG, SingHealth, and Duke-NUS Medical School over the two-day programme in June 2024.



(From left) A/Profs Chow Wan Cheng, Bernard Thong and Nigel Tan shared their leadership experiences and insights

Beyond Having Great Ideas

"All of you have great ideas. Some of them were presented here in your discussion groups. You have a lot of great ideas, but having a great idea ain't going to be enough," said Dr Puthuchear, to the CRs after the simulation exercise, where they role played as different stakeholders within the healthcare and public service: manpower division, finance division, professional regulation and licensing division, and the government.

"You need to be able to test your idea(s)," he said, elaborating that there is a whole set of cognitive bias that is tagged to that 'idea', and it is not possible for the individual who came up with it to adequately challenge it."

"You will never hear all the downside of your (own) idea," Dr Puthuchear said. "You need someone else to tell you, What did you mean by this? What did you mean by that? Have you thought about this impact?"

"(And) I hope that it (simulation exercise) has forced you to think about that."

While "bright ideas" and information are important, Dr Puthuchear urged for the young leaders to focus more on the questions that people ask, as they gradually become more involved in higher order and challenging issues such as systems, teams, and organisational changes.

"When people ask you a question, they provide you with a very, very important set of insights," he said, elaborating that the questions people ask - such as the way it is asked, the concerns, etc., demonstrate gaps in knowledge flow and understanding, and the biases and assumptions, he said.

"If you get asked a question that you did not anticipate, exercise your theory of mind and ask (yourself), 'why did he ask me that question?'... he has thought of something that I didn't think about..."

"And if you can engage in the questions that people ask you, or that are asked of your material or your ideas, you will sharpen your thinking and develop your materials far faster and better than anything else."



Guest speaker, Dr Janil Puthucheary, Senior Minister of State (Ministry of Digital Development and Information & Ministry of Health) designed a simulation exercise for the new CRs

Sincerity and Trust

"Your interaction now is not (only) in your group, but outside the group of people that you don't know very well," said Clinical Associate Professor Chow Wan Cheng, Vice Dean, Office of Academic Medicine, Duke-NUS Medical School, stressing that as leaders, there is a need for the CRs to step out of their comfort zone; and especially interact with individuals whom they do not usually work with, or those with different ideas or mindsets.

"You need to proactively go and look out for that person that you don't feel comfortable talking with, and you will discover some things that you never (thought you will) discover," A/Prof Chow said.

"Shed away all your preconceived ideas (that you may have of the other person), go with an open mind," she suggests.

"This is going to be a very difficult conversation, but you'll be surprised when the person realised that you open up, they are also prepared to open up."

It is about being "sincere", said A/Prof Chow. "If you truly want to connect with the person, patients, friends, anybody...they will recognise (that) sincerity, and it will get you very far."

However, she elaborated that sincerity is not merely uttering those words, "I'm sincere". "You must go with a heart that is sincere," she said.

Sharing the same sentiment, Associate Professor Nigel Tan, Group Director, Education (Undergraduate), SingHealth, stressed that it is important for leaders to focus on people.

"You have to be curious about people," he said. "You kind of have to know a little bit about people, where they come from, what their motivations are."

A/Prof Tan cautioned that when engaging with people or cultivating relationships, building and developing trust is vital.

"Trust is very easy to destroy. One mistake, boom, it goes, and you have to scramble three times as hard to rebuild the trust," he said.

"I've made mistakes before which have eroded trust, and I've always regretted them tremendously.

"Build trust, but please be mindful."

However, A/Prof Tan said that once trust and relationship are built over time, people are more willing to give honest advice and feedback; and shared his appreciation for the "unfiltered" advice he receives from the people whom he trust.

Like many of the other challenges that leaders may face in their journey, A/Prof Tan emphasised the need to recognise that setbacks are inevitable, and to get used to "losing".

"That's one of the things that I struggle with as a leader. Sometimes I succeed. (But) more often than not, I don't actually succeed," he said, underscoring that leadership is a learning process.

"And part of the maturity in leadership is to take all these setbacks in stride, toughening up, learning from them, and really wanting to do better the next time around, not just for yourself, but for the people you represent. Because all of us as leaders, we're really not doing it for ourselves."

Adaptation

"This trust and the ability to work together will hold you not just from the time when you are registrars," said Adjunct Associate Professor Bernard Thong, Chairman Medical Board, Tan Tock Seng Hospital.

"It kind of holds you through all the way until you are even in leadership positions like myself."

On the topic of leading a clinical department or handling diverse opinions from both junior and senior colleagues across multiple specialties and subspecialties, A/Prof Thong encouraged the CRs to be adaptable to the changes and challenges that they may encounter.

"For doctors in particular, getting doctors to change can be a challenge, because we're all trained and moulded in a certain way in our respective specialty," he shared.

"(And) if you (as a leader) don't change, things will never move."

It is important to consider the multiple variables and factors at play when heading a department, such as generational shift in mindsets, as well as environmental and societal changes. A/Prof Thong shared that his approach is to ensure that whatever the department does, such as setting standards and philosophies, needs to outlive his tenure.

"It must not be something which is tied down to the personality, or the character who is the current head of department," he said. "It should be something which should resonate with the entire department in terms of their goals, (and) the culture of the department."



A/Prof Bernard Thong



Photo opportunity with Prof Sim (in white, with red lanyard), and guest speaker Dr Janil Puthucherry