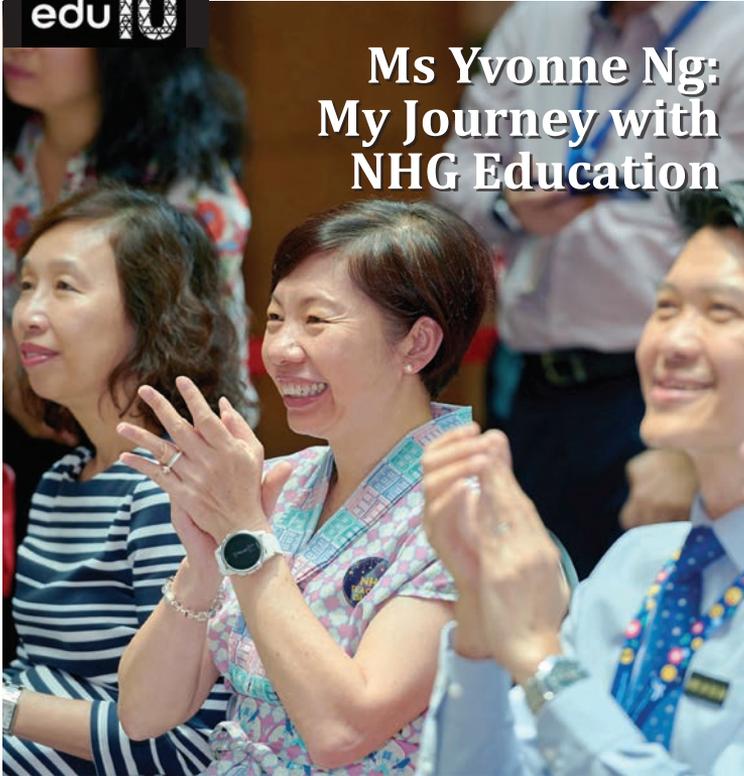




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Ms Yvonne Ng: My Journey with NHG Education



IN FOCUS

Reforming for a Sustainable Healthcare System



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HAPPENINHG

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NHGEducation

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NHG Education 10th Anniversary

INSPIRING Professionals
IMAGINING Tomorrow
ReINVENTING Healthcare

NHG EDUCATION

Ms Yvonne Ng: My Journey with NHG Education

National Healthcare Group (NHG) Education is celebrating our tenth anniversary this year. Throughout 2020, we will feature stories and voices from individuals who helped lay the foundations, educators and faculty who have trained and inspired many, and trainees who are the healthcare professionals of tomorrow.

To kick start this year-long campaign, we sat down with Senior Director (Education), Ms Yvonne Ng, who was there when it all began. Also celebrating her tenth year in NHG, Yvonne shared how NHG Education was instrumental in setting up residency training, planning for the third medical school, and applying the lessons learnt from instituting the residency system to Allied Health, Pharmacy and Nursing pre-professional education.

Congrats on your tenth year in NHG! Can you share a little bit of how the Education office started in NHG, and some of the major events that happened during its inception years?

Thank you!

NHG Education was initially parked under NHG Projects Office, back in 2009/2010.

Actually, NHG Education (or rather, NHG Residency) all started in 2008 with MOH (Ministry of Health), and the then Director of Medical Services, Professor Satkunanantham s/o Kandiah, looking to revamp post-graduate medical education in Singapore.

So MOH decided to adopt the US residency training system in 2009, and started engaging the Associate Deans from the major public hospitals to determine how residency training can be implemented. Three Sponsoring Institutions (SIs) were identified to administer the residency programmes – namely, NHG, NUHS (National University Hospital System), and SingHealth (Singapore Health Services).

Associate Professor Tham Kum Ying (then Associate Dean, TTSH) was the NHG representative in those discussions.

We were very fortunate to have her and her team lead this change. A/Prof Tham being who she is – a visionary,



"It was also important (for us) to constantly be able to attract good educators to continue the journey, do well in it, and continue to break new grounds."

who is ahead of her time – already had planned far ahead for the implementation. While MOH was introducing the shift to residency training, A/Prof Tham had already identified suitable candidates to be the first group of Programme Directors (PDs) – Associate Professor Nicholas Chew, Dr Chuah Khoo Leong, Associate Professor Chiam Peak Chiang, Associate Professor Koh Nien Yue, Dr Kenneth Heng, and the late Associate Professor Vijayan Appasamy.

2010 was an important and exciting year for us, with the setting up of residency programmes, matching the first batch of residents, and our first accreditation by ACGME-I (Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education International).

One of the key highlights was when our General Surgery (GS) Residency Programme was the only one (among the other GS programmes) to be accredited that year. After the initial accreditation, our Internal Medicine programme received accreditation without citation (in full compliance with accreditation standard), and as an SI, we were the first to receive a four-year accreditation. 2010 was also the year when we started our partnership

with LKCmedicine (Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine). We worked very closely with A/Prof Tham – who was integral to the partnership, to start the discussions with LKCmedicine; on how the school was to be built, costing for the medical school, infrastructure, etc.

Can you share with us some of the challenges that you encountered in those “early” years?

On the admin side, it was about how fast and how many people I could recruit to form the admin team (laughs), how to set up the structures, and figuring out what accreditation is about.

We’ve learnt a lot about running residency programmes from Vanderbilt [University Medical Centre, (VUMC)]. We approached Dr Donald Brady (currently Senior Associate Dean for Graduate Medical Education, VUMC), who generously shared the nuts and bolts of residency.

However, the major challenge for us was to convince the senior clinicians to adapt their teaching and training methods according to the residency model. Prof Lim (Tock Han) ‘fought’ countless battles to get buy-ins.

We (GMEC members, PDs, admin team) worked very hard to put everything together. We don’t know what we don’t know but we know we were working towards putting a good system together in NHG.

So who were the key people who helped overcome these challenges?

It really was the first group of PDs, and some of their committed CCFMs (Clinical Core Faculty Members) who helped overcome the challenges. Like the time when A/Prof Adrian Liew (then Associate Programme Director, NHG Internal Medicine Residency Programme) helped us a lot in terms of manpower planning and resident postings. We were really grateful for that.

What was the one achievement that you are most proud of?

The thing that I am most proud of is how we worked with MOH to secure funding for PPE (Pre-Professional Education). To A/Prof Tham and myself, that was our proudest moment.

What’s so special about it?

With proper funding, we had more resources, and it made it easier for hospitals to accept students. We managed to get funding for nursing, allied health, and the rest of PPE, and to be the first cluster to introduce faculty development funding for other professional groups along with the medical professionals.



With NHG Education celebrating its 10th year this year, looking forward, what do you hope that NHG Education can achieve in the next 5 to 10 years?

I hope that we will constantly consider ways to do better, especially for the BAU (Business-As-Usual) stuff. It is also important to constantly be able to attract good educators to continue the journey, do well in it, and continue to break new grounds.

When we started this journey, it was difficult. To maintain it, is even more difficult. And it will take a lot of effort to reach the next achievement.

Last but not least, I really hope that we (NHG Education) can develop a deeper working relationship with LKCmedicine.

Thank you very much for your time, Yvonne.

My pleasure.

NHG Education Lectures: Reforming for a Sustainable Healthcare System

Professor Des Gorman, Professor of Medicine from the University of Auckland, New Zealand, delivered the inaugural National Healthcare Group (NHG) Education Lectures, held on 9 October 2019.

Prof Gorman gave two lectures - on "Modern Models and Principles in Workforce Planning" and "Implementation of an Innovative Model of Healthcare", which he emphasised the need to reform healthcare to create a sustainable healthcare system that would be able to address the needs of an ageing population such as Singapore.

Some of the areas for improvement that Prof Gorman proposed included healthcare funding, workforce planning and developing social responsibility.

Rethinking Healthcare Funding

Efficiency in healthcare service includes having clinically and cost-effective healthcare, said Prof Gorman.

He observed that many public healthcare services in Singapore are government-subsidised -to provide affordable healthcare to the community, as compared to the fee-for-service (FFS) model, which he deems counter-innovative.

According to Prof Gorman, the FFS model may often result in over-servicing as it allows physicians to provide more treatments despite having no certainty that the service provided are of quality. Since the model is dependent on the quantity of care rather than quality, it raises costs, and encourages over-servicing and competition, thereby resulting in less efficient healthcare delivery.

Acknowledging that clinical outcomes are difficult to measure, Prof Gorman proposed adopting the pay-for-performance model, which evaluates the process of quality and efficiency of the healthcare service(s), and penalises healthcare providers for poor outcomes, medical errors and/or increased costs.

Effective Workforce Planning

"The problem is not that we have a lack of doctors, but it is who they are, where they are and what they are doing," said Prof Gorman.

He elaborated that the focus should be shifted to maintaining a core workforce, and planning for uncertainties in future healthcare demands; which he feels are lacking in many healthcare systems, citing his native country, New Zealand, as an example.

Prof Gorman believes that having more healthcare providers is not the only solution to satisfy the high demands in healthcare, but to trust that the healthcare system has dynamic intelligence - which has the ability to establish "contingency plan(s) based on prior experience", and to have a healthcare workforce that can be flexibly employed, quickly re-trained and redeployed.



Developing Social Responsibility

In bustling clinics, healthcare providers tend to forget to connect with the patients, and give space for mutual understanding, said Prof Gorman. "How explicitly do we (healthcare professionals) know what the "consumers" (patients) need or want?"

"Explicit understanding and alignment of the requirements of the community, as well as providers, payers, regulators, educators and other social agencies, is a pre-requisite to any sensible health planning."

Prof Gorman emphasised the need to think of healthcare as a social contract where healthcare providers are accountable to produce health professionals that society needs. He added that the more understanding health professionals and patients have towards the necessary treatments and medications needed, the less resources wasted, ultimately benefitting society as a whole.

In closing, Prof Gorman encouraged NHG to continually seek ways to re-invent healthcare and enhance healthcare delivery that caters to the community. "The reform of anything in healthcare is never easy," he said, sharing his belief that Singapore's healthcare services can be improved to ensure the efficient use of resources, and meet the growing healthcare needs of an ageing population.

Sawubona! Learning what Lies at the Heart of Resilience

Building resilience is not just telling oneself to “not give up, continue to press on, and not quitting”, said Mr Matthew Ong, invited speaker at the monthly Hospital Conference at Tan Tock Seng Hospital held on 29 November 2019, to some 280 healthcare professionals.

He believes that developing resilience – in an individual or a team – requires the efforts of the individual, the team (or community) and the leaders.

The ABCs

Mr Ong shared three important traits that the individual should possess or be cognisant of in building resilience, which were represented by A, B and C.

'A' refers to aspiration. “Without aspiration... without this dream, it is difficult to have any resilience”, he said, elaborating that there is a need for the individual to know his or her direction in work or in life. Or simply, “knowing where to go and what to achieve”.

'B' represents the individual's “sense of being”, knowing where his or her capacity and capabilities are at a particular point in time.

And 'C' refers to cutting away deadweight, which Mr Ong likened to booster rockets detaching from the payload as it reaches the earth's orbit. He also offered three simple deadweights to “cut away”, namely fear, comparison with others, and being attached to the old ways of doing things.



Sawubona! Ubuntu!

Shifting the focus to developing resilience in teams, Mr Ong introduced two traditional African phrases: “Sawubona” and “uBuntu”.

“Sawubona” or “I see you” as explained by TEDx speaker, Mr Roche Mamabolo, is an ancient isiZulu greeting to acknowledge one another, not just physically but an invitation to communicate and explore the possibilities of helping each other. “When people don't see others, they are unlikely to appreciate others,” he elaborated. “By seeing others, you are bestowing honour to them... you are shedding light into their lives.”

“(So) Before we have our grand vision, mission, and our values, I think we could start building resilience with something really simple, (that is) ‘seeing’ one another,” Mr Ong said. “To not being invisible... having a friend on that journey... that's sawubona.”

The other African phrase which Mr Ong shared was “uBuntu” or “I am because we are”; it is a Nguni Bantu term which means to show humanity towards others.

To illustrate “ubuntu”, he recounted a story about how a bunch of village children in an anthropology experiment responded when asked why they did not compete against each other for the only prize, a food basket. “They replied, uBuntu!” Mr Ong stated. “How can any of us be happy, when one of us is unhappy?”

“Isn't that beautiful?” he added. “Maybe a resilient team might think about (adopting) sawubona... seeing one another... building that common purpose... And ubuntu, that spirit that binds all of us together.”

Finding our Reset Button

Like how the sun functions as a ‘zeitgeber’ (German for ‘time-giver’) – an external or environmental cue that resets the biological circadian rhythm, Mr Ong concluded his talk by leaving the audience to ponder: “(A zeitgeber) helps us to reset physically, so what about our emotional and spiritual well-being? Is there something that would help us to reset them as well?... could it be reflections, for our mental and emotional well-being? What about giving and receiving, or loving, for our spiritual well-being?”



Award recipients and faculty from KTPH

NHG bags 63 Awards at NUSMedicine Dean's Appreciation Awards

57 medical clinicians and 6 medical departments in National Healthcare Group (NHG) were honoured for their excellent teaching and training efforts at last year's National University of Singapore Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine's (NUSMedicine) Dean's Appreciation Awards held on 6 November 2019, at the Ng Teng Fong Centre for Healthcare Innovation.

"I would like to thank all award recipients for their contributions to clinical education," said Associate Professor Wong Teck Yee, Cluster Education Director (Pre-Professional Education), NHG, in his opening address.

"I would also like to take this opportunity to remind everyone about our obligations... in my house for example, my obligations to my kids are to drive them around, provide them with pocket money, ensuring that the home WiFi works at all times, 24/7...", he said, sparking laughter in the room.

"But as medical educators, we have an obligation to the schools (medical), the organisation (NHG), and the students... we (NHG) need to ensure that all our students are fit for purpose when they leave us... [and enter] the Singapore Healthcare system."

NUSMedicine Vice-Dean (Education), Associate Professor Lau Tang Ching, who graced the event expressed his gratitude to the award recipients, and made special mention to the departments of Psychological Medicine, Tan Tock Seng Hospital (TTSH); General Medicine, TTSH; and Anaesthesia, Khoo Teck Puat Hospital, for receiving the Clinical Excellence



Award recipients and faculty from TTSH



**NUSMedicine
Vice-Dean
(Education),
A/Prof
Lau Tang Ching**

Training Awards (Department). This award is given to departments for achieving excellent posting scores of 3.8 (out of 4) and above, and teaching scores of 4.5 (out of 5) and above for two consecutive years.

"Remarkable!" said A/Prof Lau.

"The National Healthcare Group has always been well-renowned for teaching our students well and giving them a good learning experience, so you have always made a difference... and hopefully these students become better doctors in time to come," he concluded.

congratulations

to the NUSMedicine Dean's Awardees

Clinical Training Excellence Award (Department Award)

KTPH

Department of Anaesthesia Phase IV Anaesthesia

TTSH

Department of Psychological Medicine Phase IV Psychological Medicine

Department of General Medicine Phase V Medicine

Clinical Training Merit Award (Department Award)

KTPH

Department of Orthopaedic Surgery Phase V Orthopaedic Surgery

TTSH

Department of General Medicine Phase III Medicine

Department of Orthopaedic Surgery Phase V Orthopaedic Surgery

Dean's Award for Teaching Excellence

KTPH

Dr Toh Hong Chuen

Dr Veerasamy Senthamil Selvan

Dr Ong Weijie Marc

Dr Chia Luck Khng Clement

Dr Thofique Adamjee

NHGP

Dr Richard Lee Meng Kam

NSC

Dr Ho Sheun Ling Madeline

TTSH

Adjunct Professor
Chan Mun Yew Patrick

Dr Seow Cherng Jye

Clinical Associate Professor
Siow Jin Keat

Clinical Associate Professor
Suresh S/O Anandan Sahadevan

Dr Mok Kwang How

Dr Chan Yuen Sze

Clinical Associate Professor
Kuperan Ponnudurai

Dr Pillai Anand

Dr Puah Ser Hon

Dr Joseph Lo Zhiwen

Dr Ng Wei Xiang

Dr Tang Ee Ling Serene

Junior Doctor Teaching Award

IMH

Dr Zheng Shu Shan

KTPH

Dr Mak Zu Wei Joel

Dr Yap Xian Lynn Ruth

Dr Shuy Yao Jie

Dr Song Yang

Dr Serene Goh Si Ning

Dr Yuan Jing

NHGP

Dr Steven Chao Chien Chih

NSC

Dr Lim Hua Liang Joel

TTSH

Dr Nicholette Goh

Dr Fifi Gho Yong Xi

Dr Teo Wee Shen

Dr Chu Lee Voon

Dr Ooi Shiyan

Dr Choo Xin Yi

Dr Tan Yen Pin

Dr Chew Yi Rong

Dr Lim Shi Yu Derek

Dr Tay Jun Yang

Special Recognition Award

IMH

Dr Joseph Leong Jern Yi

KTPH

Dr Ong Weijie Marc

Dr Ooi Guo Shen Desmond

Dr Willis George Christopher

Thofique Adamjee

NHGP

Dr On Todd

TTSH

Dr Seow Cherng Jye

Clinical Professor Low Cheng Hock

Dr Tan Zie Hean Endean

Dr Chia Li-Ann Faith

Dr Joseph Lo Zhiwen

Dr Huey Cheong Wei

Dr Chia Tze Wei Christopher

Dr Chia Yew Woon

Dr Tan Yan Ru

Dr Vishalkumar G Shelat

Dr Tan Xiu Ling

Dr Lim Jun Pei

Dr Sunder S/O
Balasubramaniam

Dr Koh Jee Kam Timothy

Congratulations to A/Prof Yip Chee Chew!



National Healthcare Group (NHG) Education would like to congratulate Associate Professor Yip Chee Chew, Education Director (Education Development Office), Khoo Teck Puat Hospital (KTPH) as the President-Elect of the College of Clinician Educators for a two-year term (2020 – 2022).

A/Prof Yip, who is also Head and Senior Consultant at the Ophthalmology & Visual Sciences Department of KTPH and Founding Director of Admiralty Medical Centre, has always been a strong advocate of medical education and research. Over the course of his career, he has received numerous accolades for his teaching and research efforts. Some of his teaching awards include

National University of Singapore School of Medicine Dean's Award for Teaching Excellence, KTPH Teaching Excellence Award, and the prestigious NHG Education Leaders Award in 2019.

As a clinician, A/Prof Yip has established and developed various community-based eye screening programmes such as Community Home and Eye Screening Service (CHESS), and the online Training Enhancement and Accreditation for Community and Home Eye Screening (TEACHES) module, to help improve access to eye care in the community. He received numerous Quality Improvement Awards including the 2019 Public Service Transformation Award (Exemplary Innovator Award).

Established in 2017, the College of Clinician Educators (CCE) is a non-independent college under the Academy of Medicine (Singapore), that focuses on the development of clinical education in Singapore. Its aims include pedagogical upskilling, engagement and recognition of excellent educators, advocacy for clinician educators, providing an advisory role and nurturing a culture of educational scholarship and innovation. Prior to his newly appointed role as president, A/Prof Yip had the honour of serving as the honorary treasurer of the first elected College Council.