

MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate release

Singapore Cancer Society and National Cancer Centre Ink Partnership to Provide Holistic and Seamless Cancer Support to More Singaporeans & Intensify Upstream Prevention Methods to Reduce Cancer Incidence

- *Two leading cancer bodies to join forces to lead the fight against cancer and provide Singaporeans greater cancer care*
- *One key collaboration is the upstream prevention efforts championed by both parties through a dedicated Cancer Genetics Service Screening Programme that will benefit all Singaporeans; with more support for the financially needy*
- *The partnership epitomises the Ministry of Health's "3 Beyonds" strategy to provide sustained quality care to patients, survivors, and their family beyond treatment by leveraging on each other's expertise and resources through community outreach, screening efforts, advocacy, acute rehabilitation and patient care support amongst other programmes and services*
- *To strengthen the seamless integrated care to the community; SCS will be co-locating to the new NCCS building in 2022*

Singapore, 27 February 2019: Singapore Cancer Society (SCS) and the National Cancer Centre Singapore (NCCS) inked a partnership this morning that will provide Singaporeans greater access to integrated cancer care. Signed by Mr Albert Ching, CEO of SCS and Professor William Hwang, Medical Director of NCCS, the partnership will see more Singaporeans benefit from a seamless experience when managing their cancer and hopefully reduce cancer incidence through an enhanced genetics screening programme championed by both parties.

Medical expertise and community outreach to benefit more Singaporeans

SCS and NCCS, who are currently leaders in championing cancer care in their respective areas, will leverage on each other's expertise and resources to further engage Singaporeans to take charge of their health and seek necessary assistance from both parties.

NCCS provides a holistic and multidisciplinary approach to cancer treatment and patient care by providing a comprehensive range of medical specialties and services. It is a medical institution which has a deep-rooted culture in cancer research. In cancer support, NCCS has been providing psychosocial support to its patients at every stage of their journey with cancer to enhance their well-being and quality of life, and empowering them with knowledge of the disease. It has also been reaching out to the community to raise awareness about cancer and the importance of early screening.

SCS has established itself as the pioneer for cancer rehabilitation services in Singapore, public education, and screening services (especially to the heartlands and needy community) for early detection without any charge to eligible Singaporeans and PRs (mammogram and Pap smear for women's gynaecological cancer, faecal immunochemical test for colorectal cancer). To further educate and encourage Singaporeans and PRs to play a greater part in cancer prevention, SCS will be developing dedicated public education efforts with NCCS to increase awareness about cancer, and genetics-driven screening education will be incorporated into educational resources to the public.

Intensifying Upstream Prevention Efforts – Cancer Genetics Service Screening Programme (CGSSP)

This will be the first time a government healthcare institution and voluntary welfare organisation are coming together to collaborate on upstream prevention efforts in addition to their current activities.

A key advancement in upstream prevention measures is the adoption of genetics screening to identify potential cancer genes in a strategic bid to reduce cancer incidence.

Currently, the Cancer Genetics Service (CGS) at NCCS provides cancer risk assessment services to people with family histories of cancer. The services, provided by clinicians with expertise in both genetics and oncology, involve cancer risk assessments, pre and post-test genetic counselling, facilitation of genetic testing and subsequent cancer risk management plans tailored to the individual and their relatives. The CGS team is also actively involved in translational and clinical human genomics and health services research.

Prof William Hwang, Medical Director, NCCS said, “On average, about 10-15% of all cancers have a hereditary nature. Since its inception, the CGS team in NCCS has become the “go to” place for clinical cancer genetic and genomic medicine clinical practice in Singapore and the region. We currently see 100 patients a week. Joining hands with the SCS would not only allow the community greater access to genetic screening, but also allow the CGS team to reach out and help more high-risk individuals, especially the needy, so that we can put them on close surveillance. If cancer is detected, they can be treated early through planned treatment options, making the chances of survival better. With genetic screening education from both organisations, we hope to be able to break existing barriers and increase the uptake of genetic screening and testing.”

Mr Albert Ching, Chief Executive Officer, Singapore Cancer Society said, “SCS is dedicated to minimise cancer and maximise lives through various effective and impactful programmes for the prevention and control of cancer. We place great emphasis on intensifying our cancer prevention efforts to reduce cancer incidence. Hence Singapore Cancer Society has adopted upstream measures as part of our vision to create a cancer-free community. While we do our utmost to reduce cancer incidence through our various upstream cancer prevention programmes, and public education awareness and outreach activities, community involvement is crucial in supporting the cancer community. We have embarked on this long term partnership with leading healthcare institution NCCS, as they have the expertise on cancer genetics. We hope this programme will empower individuals to take charge of their lives and make committed actions to find out more about their hereditary situation and reduce cancer incidence where possible. We also hope that through such initiatives, we deepen our engagements with the community and empower them to step up and join us in the fight against cancer.”

Existing SCS beneficiaries who meet testing criteria will also be recommended to undergo genetics testing and if they are found to be a carrier of the causative gene mutation, their family members will be encouraged to be screened too. Family members identified to have a genetic predisposition to cancer, would be offered to get on the CGSSP that provides subsidy for intensified cancer surveillance and/or risk-reducing strategies for the early detection or prevention of cancer.

SCS will be stepping up to devote Cancer Care Navigators in the near future to better support the identified high-risk individuals in this active surveillance programme. The CGSSP will additionally support financially needy individuals (CHAS card holders) to ensure that they are able to continue with the regular surveillance that they need.

Cancer Care Beyond Treatment

In addition to the CGSSP, this partnership will also provide a continuum of cancer care beyond treatment that is accessible, affordable and of quality. A dedicated acute rehabilitation centre – the first of its kind, is planned to be developed to provide a 1-stop holistic care plan for cancer patients supported by a multi-disciplinary team that includes oncologists, surgeons, rehabilitation physicians, allied health professionals and psychosocial support staff.

An interactive learning hub is also planned to be developed to further educate and empower the public to manage their cancer journey by providing them insights and a glimpse into the actual experience coping with cancer.

To provide a seamless experience for cancer patients and support the above plans, SCS will co-locate to the new NCCS' building come 2022. The new office will house the various SCS cancer support teams which include Welfare, Psychosocial, Home Hospice Care, etc.

Integrated care under one roof

With this co-location within NCCS, cancer patients who require financial aid, welfare, rehabilitation, or hospice support, will no longer have to travel to multiple locations for assistance; making it hassle-free and more convenient for them. Direct medical care from NCCS and additional assistance from SCS can be easily obtained, all under one roof.

About Singapore Cancer Society (www.singaporecancersociety.org.sg)

Established in 1964, Singapore Cancer Society is a self-funded voluntary welfare organisation which provides patient care services to needy cancer patients through its welfare, hospice home care, cancer treatment subsidy and rehabilitation support programmes. In addition, the Society also provides free cancer screening services and promotes cancer awareness and prevention through its public education and community outreach programmes.

About National Cancer Centre Singapore (www.nccs.com.sg)

National Cancer Centre Singapore (NCCS) provides a holistic and multi-disciplinary approach to cancer treatment and patient care. We see close to 65 per cent of the public sector oncology cases, and they are benefiting from the sub-specialisation of our clinical oncologists. To deliver among the best in cancer treatment and care, our clinicians work closely with our scientists who conduct robust cutting-edge clinical and translational research programmes which are internationally recognised. NCCS strives to be a global leading cancer centre, and shares its expertise and knowledge by offering training to local and overseas medical professionals.

For more information, please contact:

Kumudha Panneerchelvam (Ms)

Corporate Affairs Senior Exec

DID: 6436 5237

Mobile: 9819 6589

Email: kumudha_P@singaporecancersociety.org.sg

Siti Zawiyah (Ms)

Corporate Communications Senior Exec

DID: 6236 9429

Mobile: 9457 5542

Email: siti.zawiyah.aboo@nccs.com.sg

Celia Au (Ms)

Corporate Affairs Manager

DID: 6421 5801

Mobile: 9668 9465

Email: celia_au@singaporecancersociety.org.sg

Sunny Wee (Mr)

Advisor, Media & Community Relations

DID: 6236 9535

Mobile: 9274 6922

Email: sunny.wee@nccs.com.sg