COS FACTSHEET: ENABLING THE “THREE BEYONDS”

A FUTURE-READY HEALTHCARE WORKFORCE

1. A competent, caring and committed healthcare workforce is at the core of delivering quality patient care. To meet rising demand, the Ministry of Health (MOH) will continue to grow both the capacity and capabilities of our healthcare workforce.

Growing the Healthcare Workforce

2. In the next three years, we will require about 9,000 staff for new facilities and services in the public healthcare and community care sectors, about half of which are in Professional, Manager, Executive and Technician (PMET) level roles. MOH will invest an additional $24 million over the next three years in various manpower development schemes to enable more mid-career Singaporeans to take up a new career in healthcare. These include:

a. Professional Conversion Programmes for Nursing

3. For mid-career professionals interested to join nursing, we have established Professional Conversion Programmes (PCPs) for them to be trained to serve as Enrolled Nurses (ENs) and Registered Nurses (RNs). Since 2003, about 800 mid-career professionals have undergone conversion training to become nurses.

4. We will make further enhancements to the PCPs for Nursing to better support sponsoring healthcare institutions to hire and train mid-career professionals for nursing. MOH will increase funding for nursing PCP training so that employers co-fund only 10 percent of the training cost, down from 20 to 50 percent currently. New on-the-job training support of $12,000 and $16,000 respectively for each graduating PCP EN and RN hired will also be provided to employers to enable them to better support PCP-trained nurses with their transition into a new career. This will apply for PCP-trained nurses graduating from 2017 onwards.

b. Healthcare Graduate Studies Award for Nursing

5. MOH will introduce an overseas nursing scholarship under the Healthcare Graduate Studies Award (HGSA). This two-year overseas scholarship will support non-nursing degree graduates, including those with prior work experience, to pursue a Graduate Entry Masters nursing programme overseas. Upon graduation, they will return to practise as a RN in our public healthcare institutions.

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1 Course fees for the nursing PCPs are fully funded by Workforce Singapore (WSG), MOH, and a sponsoring healthcare institution. Trainees will also receive monthly training allowances and a one-time Career Transition Bonus of $1,500 or $2,000 upon graduation.

2 The HGSA is offered to final year undergraduates or recent university graduates who are keen to pursue a Master degree in selected health science disciplines. There are currently nine courses of study eligible under the HGSA, ranging from Speech Therapy to Public Health.
c. Care Coordinator Associates and Part-Time Basic Care Assistants

6. Our Regional Health Systems (RHSes) are expanding their programmes to help patients transit from hospital to home. The RHSes will train more mid-career Singaporeans who do not have prior healthcare experience to take on the new role of Care Coordinator Associates to help healthcare professionals address patients’ needs holistically, coordinate the care services required post-discharge and empower patients to manage their conditions well at home.

7. Another new role is Basic Care Assistants. Several public hospitals have created this part-time role to help nurses provide personal care to patients, such as feeding and transferring. MOH will provide employers with on-the-job training support of $10,000 for each Basic Care Assistant hired.

d. Community Care Traineeship Programme

8. The Agency for Integrated Care (AIC)’s Community Care Traineeship Programme (CCTP) is a Place and Train programme that provides structured bite-sized training for Singaporeans to take up healthcare and therapy assistant roles in the growing aged care sector. To encourage employers to better support local workers in this programme, MOH will provide a new on-the-job training support of $10,000 to employers for hiring and training each community care worker.

e. Senior Management Associate Scheme

9. Besides care staff, the aged care sector will need PMETs to join its workforce to lead the new institutions. Mid-career Singaporeans with managerial experience can tap on the Senior Management Associate Scheme to switch careers to the aged care sector. Mid-career entrants hired by participating community care institutions under the scheme will attend an induction and training programme, and have attachment opportunities with community care institutions to better understand the context and challenges of work in the community care sector.

f. ‘Return to Nursing’ Programme

10. The “Return to Nursing” programme encourages non-practising local nurses to rejoin the healthcare sector, and in particular, take up new positions in the aged care sector. The scheme will now adopt a Place and Train format where returning nurses will be able to first secure employment with an institution before undergoing a three-month refresher course to update their skills and knowledge. These returning nurses will draw full salaries instead of training allowances for the duration of the course. Non-practising nurses ENs and RNs returning to nursing and joining the community care sector will continue to be eligible for a bonus of $3,000 and $5,000 respectively.
Building Capabilities in Our Healthcare Workforce

11. Even as we expand our workforce, we need to nurture a future-ready healthcare workforce that can support our efforts to transform our healthcare delivery to meet the needs of our ageing population.

a. Future Nursing Career Review

12. To support key shifts which we are making in our healthcare system, a Future Nursing Career Review Committee was set up in April last year to recommend how the nursing workforce can transform itself to be future-ready. The Committee comprises nursing representatives from the acute, primary and intermediate and long-term care (ILTC) settings, as well as educational institutions. Senior Minister of State for Health Dr Amy Khor serves as the Committee's advisor to the Committee.

13. The Committee has made nine recommendations under three areas of focus:

“Care” - Enabling nurses to focus on patient care

(i) Leverage on technology and redesign work to reduce administrative and non-clinical duties so that nurses can devote more time to providing nursing care to patients; and

(ii) With time freed up for patient care, to enable nurses to practise at a deeper level, taking on expanded nursing care roles from basic to more complex clinical care

“Community” - Strengthening community nursing

(iii) RHSes to pilot a network of community nursing teams in their regions to help patients transit smoothly from hospital to home, and stay well in the community;

(iv) RHSes to partner ILTC providers in their region to centrally recruit and deploy nurses through manpower development and deployment schemes;

(v) Develop community nursing as a career pathway within the clinical track, with a robust competency framework of skills needed for community nursing, to underpin training and career development;

(vi) Attract ‘O’ and ‘A’-level students and in-service nurses to join community nursing through a new scholarship; and

(vii) Enhance professional development of future nursing leaders to include exposure to both acute and community care settings so that they can lead and manage integration of care.
“Competencies” - Developing competencies for the future.

(viii) Enhance the pre-registration and post-registration nursing training programmes to equip nurses with the competencies to practise across both the acute and community care sectors; and

(ix) Structure the nursing training system to better support multiple pathways to deepen nursing competencies, with a stronger emphasis on modularised and applied learning.

14. MOH will work with Healthcare Services Employees’ Union and healthcare institutions to engage various groups of nurses. Through these engagements, we will seek nurses’ inputs and further suggestions on how to better implement and operationalise the recommendations on the ground. These include identifying the administrative and non-clinical tasks that can be made more efficient in their day-to-day work, and the core skills and competencies required for community nursing.

b. Skills Frameworks for Healthcare Occupations

15. Beyond nursing, we are working to build a future-ready healthcare workforce across all healthcare professions. MOH is collaborating with SkillsFuture Singapore (SSG) to develop a Skills Framework for the entire healthcare sector to support healthcare professionals in their career and clinical development. The effort will include developing Skills Frameworks for nurses, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, speech therapists, pharmacy technicians and support care staff. These are targeted for launch in end 2018. MOH is also working with the Ministry of Social and Family Development (MSF) to ensure that the Skills Framework for the Social Service Sector is applicable to our medical social workers and clinical psychologists.

c. Development of Pharmacy Workforce

16. Under the National Pharmacy Strategy, MOH will help pharmacists and pharmacy support staff develop their capabilities. The National Pharmacy Residency Programmes were developed last year to enable pharmacists to attain advanced level clinical skills to provide specialised pharmaceutical care. The inaugural batch of 15 pharmacy residents has commenced their training under these programmes. Last year, MOH also launched the Advanced Practice Competency Framework, which is a developmental tool for pharmacists to work towards advanced level competencies.

17. Pharmacy technicians partner pharmacists in providing pharmaceutical care and medication management. To equip them with more advanced skills and knowledge so that they can provide better support to pharmacists, MOH has worked with Nanyang Polytechnic on a SkillsFuture Earn and Learn Advanced Diploma Programme in Pharmaceutical Sciences. We will launch this 18-month structured programme in April 2017.

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