

Annex: Recipients of the President's Award for Nurses 2017



Mdm Kuttiammal D/O Sundarasan
Chief Nurse
Ng Teng Fong General Hospital
Age: 57

Mdm Kuttiammal has been a nurse for 40 years. She was identified to take on the nursing leadership role in setting up Singapore's first integrated hospital development, comprising Ng Teng Fong General Hospital and Jurong Community Hospital.

She contributed significantly to the planning and design of the hospital buildings, walking the ground to conduct defect checks and commissioning of the facilities. Through extensive workflow analyses and collaborative discussions with stakeholders, she has helped achieve the integration and seamless connection envisioned between the two hospitals.

As Chief Nurse, she singlehandedly interviewed the hospitals' first 300 nurses at the start, and grew the nursing team to 1,800 today. Under her leadership, nurses at NTFGH and JCH were trained to be proficient in their roles within the new hospital environment, and navigate its systems and devices competently.

Mdm Kuttiammal has been pivotal in pushing the boundaries of IT to enable better use of nursing resources for patient care. Many technological innovations were introduced at NTFGH and JCH under her guidance, including customised devices such as the Electronic Patient Information Board, which eliminates the use of paper and provides up-to-date information at the patient's bedside. Another device that was implemented is the "Code Blue" button at the patient's bedside, where emergency medical help can be summoned within three minutes of activation.

A firm believer of continuing education and training, Mdm Kuttiammal led her team to develop the "Virtual Nurse", Singapore's first mobile learning application to facilitate nursing training on campus.

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Dr Lee Yee Mei (李綺微)
Assistant Director of Nursing, National University Hospital
Head, Nursing, National University Cancer Institute, Singapore
Age: 40s

Yee Mei believes firmly in care beyond the hospital. She initiated several impactful projects – some the first of their kind in Singapore – allowing patients to receive care at home and in the community. In 2015, she led a project reducing the length of stay and readmission for patients receiving chemotherapy by at least 28 days per patient, enabling treatment to move from the ward to the clinic.

She has introduced a chemotherapy home care programme that has saved patients and caregivers time and cost. She also collaborated with community partners to provide venepuncture procedures for cancer patients near their homes, reducing their wait time for blood taking by two hours.

Yee Mei is the first Advanced Practice Nurse in Singapore to be credentialed to perform bone marrow extraction, a procedure typically done by doctors. She makes it a point to understand her patients' pain threshold and how they cope with pain before every procedure, advising them appropriately to lessen their stress. She has been independently performing bone marrow extractions since 2009.

She is committed to building a competent nursing workforce and does her part by mentoring younger nurses. She guides aspiring APNs, supervises student research, and promotes clinical pathways for nursing development. She conducts and reviews research, and has held teaching appointments at the Alice Lee Centre of Nursing Studies and the Ngee Ann-Adelaide Education Centre.

Yee Mei is active in cancer patient support groups and, in fact, started the inaugural National Lymphoma Support Group and World Lymphoma Day in Singapore. An advocate of cancer screening, she organises public talks and supports community screening activities.

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Ms Alison Sim Lei Choo (沈丽珠)
Director of Nursing
St. Andrew's Community Hospital
Age: 57

Alison played an instrumental role in growing St. Andrew's Community Hospital from a 160-bed to a 240-bed hospital with a wide range of services. She set up the hospital's dementia care and palliative care services, taking it upon herself to acquire the expertise through a Certificate in Palliative Care. She ensures that her staff are equally well-equipped to deliver the care under these new initiatives, supporting them for relevant training and attachments at hospice care providers.

A champion of care integration for patients, Alison has developed clinical services that are integrated with Changi General Hospital's, such as the sub-acute care ward at the Integrated Building, and homecare services in collaboration with CGH's Hospital-to-Home programme. She is currently developing a Community Palliative Programme with CGH for patients with chronic illnesses living in the eastern region.

Her advocacy for the use of technology to improve patient care has led SACH to be a pioneer of innovation in the community care sector. It was the first community hospital to share a common Electronic Medical Record (EMR) with its partner acute hospital, and to utilise systems such as the National Electronic Health Record (NEHR), and the national Common System for patient administration. Other firsts include the use of the closed loop medication management system, e-nurse charting and e-vital signs monitoring.

Described by colleagues as a humble leader, Alison is not afraid to roll up her sleeves to provide clinical care where needed. She is often seen supporting her team outside of office hours, and still finds time to do volunteer work in the community.

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Dr Margaret Soon Mei Ling (孙美玲)
Deputy Director of Nursing
Tan Tock Seng Hospital
Age: 46

Margaret has continually defied expectations in her nursing journey. She started off with a General Certificate in Nursing and continued to pursue her nursing studies, receiving many awards and scholarships along the way. She eventually graduated with a PhD from Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio, becoming the first nurse in Tan Tock Seng Hospital to earn a Doctorate in Nursing.

Margaret was an infection control nurse who served through the SARS episode. She stabilised the infection control service's nursing surveillance control and audit framework, which TTSH and its Institute of Infectious Disease and Epidemiology are well-regarded for locally and internationally.

Dedicated to providing person-centric care for geriatric patients, she helped design and implement the Framework for Inpatient Care of the Frail Elderly (FIFE) to create a senior-friendly hospital. She also established the Geriatric Resource Nurse (GRN) model to improve the geriatric knowledge and expertise of bedside nurses. GRN initiatives have seen nurses initiating their own activity kits for elderly patients, sitting patients out of bed, and weaning them off diapers. Within three years, 180 GRNs were trained and are deployed across 35 wards, clinics and the emergency department in TTSH.

Outside of the hospital, Margaret volunteers at the Healthserve Clinic assisting disadvantaged migrant workers. She also contributes to developing nursing capabilities in developing countries, and was an adjunct faculty member of the University of Manchester at the Singapore Institute of Technology (SIT-UOM).

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Mr Wong Kok Cheong (黄国昌)
Deputy Director of Nursing, Changi General Hospital
Age: 51

Kok Cheong has been a nurse for 25 years. His key contributions at Changi General Hospital include creating the Healthcare Communicator (or iCOM), an app that translates nursing instructions from English into Cantonese to improve communication between nurses and dialect-speaking patients.

He also introduced the Kaizen Everyday Engagement Programme (KEEP) which motivates and empowers nurses to make everyday improvements. Two projects of note include a pictorial guide detailing the correct sequence for blood draws, and an efficient way of collecting and safekeeping personal belongings of inpatients. He is committed to nursing process improvement and makes an effort to engage colleagues across various departments to achieve this.

Kok Cheong is an active researcher who conducts evidence-based research studies to improve patient care. His findings have been used to standardise and implement clearer safety measures in nursing, decreasing the number of falls and pressure ulcers at CGH as a result. He chairs the interdisciplinary Fall Safety Committee and is Advisor to the Pressure Ulcer Prevention Taskforce, which reviews and implements strategies to reduce falls and hospital-acquired pressure ulcers. He is now the nurse lead for nursing transformation at CGH.

He readily shares best practices with nurses from other institutions. He is frequently invited to lecture at nursing schools on topics that he is passionate about, including risk management tools, nursing informatics, and quality improvement.