

## MEDIA RELEASE

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For Immediate Publication

### **NUHCS COMMEMORATES 15TH ANNIVERSARY BY RAISING FUNDS TO SUPPORT PATIENTS IN NEED**

*The NUHCS Heart Fund raised more than S\$1.2 million to assist financially disadvantaged patients and to support continuous medical research and education programmes in cardiovascular diseases*

SINGAPORE — The National University Heart Centre, Singapore (NUHCS) celebrated its 15th anniversary with a charity golf and dinner event to support patients in need through the NUHCS Heart Fund. More than S\$1.2 million was raised through the event.

The dinner event was graced by Guest of Honour Mr Tharman Shanmugaratnam, Senior Minister and Coordinating Minister for Social Policies, and saw donors come together to be part of the national centre's ongoing efforts in meeting Singapore's growing healthcare needs.

NUHCS was established in 2008 to bring together the resources, expertise and capabilities in the areas of Cardiology, Cardiothoracic and Vascular Surgery in view of the increasing number of people suffering from heart disease every year. Cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death in Singapore and in 2021, accounted for almost one in three deaths caused by heart diseases or stroke.

Furthermore, the number of heart attacks in Singapore is projected to rise nearly three-fold (194.4 per cent) from 482 cases per 100,000 population in 2025 to 1,418 per 100,000 population in 2050, with obesity predicted to be the main metabolic risk factor.<sup>1</sup>

A key centre for the treatment and management of complex cardiovascular diseases, NUHCS's core clinical programmes include heart failure, structural heart disease, acute coronary syndrome, vascular medicine and therapy, women's heart health and heart rhythm.

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<sup>1</sup> Chew et al. Trends and predictions of metabolic risk factors for acute myocardial infarction: findings from a multiethnic nationwide cohort. The Lancet Regional Health - Western Pacific, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lanwpc.2023.10080>

## **Saving lives through the NUHCS Heart Fund**

The NUHCS Heart Fund was established by NUHCS to assist financially disadvantaged patients and to support continuous medical research and education programmes in the field of cardiovascular diseases.

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit in 2019, lorry driver Mr Ong Yew Lee found himself out of a job and had difficulties making ends meet. This was compounded by aortic stenosis, a narrowing of the aortic valve that constantly left him breathless. The condition affects normal blood flow out of the heart and could cause heart damage, major health problems, and even death.

In March this year, the 61-year-old underwent a transcatheter aortic valve implantation (TAVI) to treat the condition. With a significant subsidy from the NUHCS Heart Fund, Mr Ong was able to get the treatment he needed and has since recovered well, finding work as a lorry driver once more.

Over the years, the NUHCS Heart Fund has seen an annual growth of five to 10 per cent, owing to generous subsidies from the Government and donations from individuals.

Professor Tan Huay Cheem, Chairman of the Fundraising Committee, said: “Between August 2021 and July 2022, the Fund helped 22 patients with more than S\$243,000 disbursed. The Fund has been supported by many of NUHCS’s grateful patients, well-wishers, corporate companies, philanthropic organisations and through our own fund-raising initiatives such as charity concerts and musicals.”

However, the number of recipients has also increased, including patients who require long-term financial support due to regular follow-ups at the clinic and long-term medications, but yet are not covered by the other available avenues of financial support.

## **Strengthening heart health**

To improve the outcomes of individuals with heart-related conditions, NUHCS is also setting up community cardiology clinics in the heartlands to work with General Practitioners (GPs) as part of Healthier SG.

Associate Professor James Yip, Director of NUHCS, said: “Improving heart health in the community is a multifaceted approach that has far-reaching benefits, including strengthening preventive health and reducing the burden of cardiovascular disease. We want to foster stronger ties with our community partners, and enhance access and convenience for our patients. This includes providing patients with earlier referrals to a heart specialist and direct assistance for advanced cardiac tests when necessary.”

The first clinic was launched at Jurong Medical Centre in January this year.

NUHCS as a national centre will also support Project RESET, a research initiative that was newly awarded a S\$25 million grant from the National Medical Research Council. Project RESET will capture billions of data points of lifestyle, physiology and new molecular markers to provide a full diagnostic picture for each patient, while leveraging

Artificial Intelligence (AI) to prevent early heart disease and make cardiovascular preventive health more accessible to individuals.

## Chinese Glossary

National University Heart Centre, Singapore (NUHCS)	新加坡国立大学心脏中心 (国大心脏中心)
NUHCS Heart Fund	国大心脏中心心脏基金
Associate Professor James Yip Director and Senior Consultant National University Heart Centre, Singapore (NUHCS)	叶伟麟副教授 总主任兼高级顾问医生 国大心脏中心
Professor Tan Huay Cheem Senior Consultant Department of Cardiology National University Heart Centre, Singapore (NUHCS)	陈淮沁教授 高级顾问医生 心脏内科 国大心脏中心

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## About the National University Heart Centre, Singapore

The National University Heart Centre, Singapore (NUHCS) brings together the resources, expertise and capabilities in the areas of Cardiology, Cardiothoracic and Vascular Surgery to better meet the needs of the growing number of patients with heart disease. A key centre for the treatment and management of complex cardiovascular diseases, its core clinical programmes include heart failure, structural heart disease, acute coronary syndrome, vascular medicine and therapy, women's heart health and heart rhythm.

Comprising a team of cardiovascular specialists and experts from a multitude of medical and surgical disciplines, the NUHCS provides a comprehensive and holistic approach to the treatment of patients with heart problems. This approach is backed by cutting edge knowledge and information gathered by the Cardiovascular Research Institute (CVRI).

The CVRI focuses on developing niche research work in creating new knowledge in support of NUHCS' core clinical programmes by working in close collaboration with both local and international renowned research institutes such as the Agency for Science, Technology and Research (A\*STAR) and New Zealand's Christchurch School of Medicine and Health Sciences.

Partnerships are formed with various medical institutes as NUHCS is a selected training centre for international physicians. Education and training ensures that our medical professionals are kept abreast. Nurturing the next generation, our specialists are also actively involved in conducting workshops and teaching programmes for our medical undergraduates.

For more information, visit: <https://www.nuhcs.com.sg>.