

## MEDIA RELEASE

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**NHG launches Autism Collaborative to build capability and strengthen support for the autism community**  
*In support of Autism Awareness Month and World Infant, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Day, the “Journey with Autism” public talk series spotlights the importance of early support, understanding and inclusion.*

1. The National Healthcare Group (NHG) has launched the **Autism Collaborative** to enhance the support for individuals with autism and their caregivers, and for professionals working with individuals with autism through training, research, and community engagement. Led by the Institute of Mental Health (IMH), NHG’s specialist centre for psychiatric care in Singapore, with support from institutions like the National University Hospital and KK Women’s and Children’s Hospital, the Autism Collaborative aims to create a more seamless and supportive ecosystem for individuals with autism across different life stages.
2. Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) continues to be one of the most prevalent developmental conditions seen at IMH. IMH’s Child Guidance Clinics (CGC) saw about 140 new cases with ASD each year, from 2021 to 2023. It is one of the top five conditions seen at CGC, making up 14% (900) of the total number of patients currently requiring treatment and support. This steady demand underscores the ongoing need to strengthen systems of care, build professional capability, and enhance support networks for individuals with autism and their families.
3. The Autism Collaborative will address this need by bringing together various stakeholders to drive a coordinated, community-centred approach to autism support. It will facilitate better access to resources, collaborative research, training, co-creation opportunities, and promote advocacy efforts for stronger awareness and community action.
4. Ms Denise Phua, Mayor of Central Singapore District and President of Autism Resource Centre (Singapore) who witnessed the launch of the initiative at the **“Journey with Autism”** event on 26 April commended the effort, “As a long-time advocate for the autism community, I am heartened to see NHG taking this step to strengthen support networks. By building stronger connections among professionals, caregivers, and community partners, we are not only creating a more inclusive society, but also strengthening our community’s capability. Together, we can ensure individuals with autism thrive with dignity, have meaningful opportunities, and contribute to the vibrancy of our society.”
5. Highlighting the commitment beyond clinical care, A/Prof Daniel Fung, Chief Executive Officer, IMH, NHG, said, “The Autism Collaborative represents a significant step forward in NHG’s collective efforts to provide early intervention, accessible mental health care, and community-led solutions for individuals with autism and their families. With research that informs service delivery and policy, we aim to develop more responsive strategies that meet the evolving needs of the autism community. By working together, we can ensure that no one walks this journey alone.”
6. Going forward, IMH will invite more organisations, professionals, and individuals to be part of this initiative and contribute to a future where those on the autism spectrum are supported and empowered.
7. The **“Journey with Autism”** event on 26 April was organised by IMH to commemorate **World Autism Awareness Month** and **World Infant, Child, and Adolescent Mental Health Day**. The event drew about 200 participants – including parents, educators, healthcare professionals, and members of the public – who attended expert-led discussions on managing anxiety in children with autism, sensory processing differences, and caregiver experiences. The talks deepened understanding and promoted a more inclusive approach to supporting the autism community.

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**About National Healthcare Group**

The National Healthcare Group (NHG) is a leader in public healthcare in Singapore recognised for delivering high value patient care. Our clinical services are provided through an integrated system of primary care polyclinics, acute care tertiary hospitals, community hospitals, national specialty centres, and community-based ambulatory care centres. Together, we provide comprehensive, holistic, and innovative healthcare to address the needs of our patients and the population we serve. As a learning organisation, we are establishing ourselves as an academic health system to drive clinical excellence, raise research intensity and grow our academic partnerships to continually improve the way we deliver care to our patients.

As the Regional Health Manager for 1.5 million residents in Central and North Singapore, NHG collaborates with private general practices, public and community health and social care providers to keep residents well and healthy.

With more than 20,000 healthcare professionals in NHG, we are committed towards building healthier and resilient communities, and Adding Years of Healthy Life to the people we serve.

For more information [www.nhg.com.sg](http://www.nhg.com.sg).

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**About the Institute of Mental Health (IMH)**

The Institute of Mental Health (IMH), a member of the National Healthcare Group, is the only tertiary psychiatric care institution in Singapore. Located on the sprawling 23-hectare campus of Buangkok Green Medical Park in the north-eastern part of Singapore, IMH offers a multidisciplinary and comprehensive range of psychiatric, rehabilitative and therapy services in hospital-based and community-based settings. The 2,000-bedded hospital aims to meet the needs of three groups of patients – children and adolescents (aged below 19 years), adults and the elderly. Besides providing clinical services, IMH dedicates resources to carry out mental health promotion and raise mental health literacy. IMH also leads in mental health research and training the next generation of mental health professionals in Singapore. For more information, please visit [www.imh.com.sg](http://www.imh.com.sg).

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## About the Autism Collaborative

While Singapore offers a range of autism-related services, many families continue to face challenges navigating the landscape of available support. The Autism Collaborative aims to bridge these gaps through a multidisciplinary, community-driven approach that enhances early intervention, improves access to mental health services, and strengthens the capabilities of helping professionals.

The Collaborative's work is centred around four key focus areas:

### 1. One-Stop Resource Hub

A centralised digital platform offering easy access to up-to-date information, services, and support networks. It serves as a go-to resource for individuals with autism, their families, and professionals seeking guidance.

### 2. Professional Training

Training programmes specifically for professionals to enhance the quality and consistency of services for the autism community are offered. These workshops and courses are tailored to varying levels of expertise and are designed to strengthen clinical and educational practice. Beyond individual skill-building, the initiative aims to foster a growing network of professionals who can consult and support one another in their professional development. By investing in the growth of this community, the Collaborative helps ensure that individuals with autism receive informed, coordinated, and empathetic care.

### 3. Community and Caregiver Support

Dedicated networks that enable caregivers and families to connect, share lived experiences, engage in advocacy efforts, and contribute to participatory research. These efforts help to build a more inclusive and supportive ecosystem around individuals with autism.

### 4. Research and Innovation

Research under the Autism Collaborative strives to be community-driven, grounded in lived experiences, and designed to inform real-world solutions. The initiative hopes to bring together multidisciplinary partners to conduct studies that explore new models of care, assess service effectiveness, and identify gaps in support across life stages. Findings from this research will directly influence policy recommendations, improve service delivery, and ensure interventions remain relevant, accessible, and evidence based.

For more info on the Autism Collaborative, visit [www.asdcollaborative.sg](http://www.asdcollaborative.sg).