

MEDIA RELEASE

OFFICIAL OPENING OF QUEENSTOWN POLYCLINIC AND COMMUNITY WELLNESS CENTRE (CWC) – TUESDAY, 13 JANUARY 2009

The Institute of Mental Health, together with SingHealth Polyclinics, is pleased to declare the Community Wellness Centre (CWC) and Queenstown Polyclinic officially open today. Operating with a “patient first” mindset, we believe that being located under one roof will enable us to provide more comprehensive healthcare services to the community in the Western part of Singapore, services which encompass both the Mind and Body aspects of wellness.

The Community Wellness Centre (CWC) is IMH’s third Satellite Outpatient Clinic, and began operating in February 2008. It is a transformation of IMH’s Alexandra Behavioral Medicine Clinic (BMC), which had been located at 141 Viking Road since its humble beginnings in 1986, when it was known as the Alexandra Psychiatric Outpatient Clinic.

Designed as a one-stop wellness centre, the CWC provides integrated clinical and community care to patients in an accessible location. Both new and follow-up patients seeking quality psychiatric care now have another option for it in the CWC at Queenstown, on top of IMH at Buangkok.

Additionally, the scope of services offered at the CWC has been expanded and is more multi-disciplinary in nature. Patients are empowered to better understand their condition, treatment, and recovery process thanks to the widened roles of nurses and pharmacists at the CWC. The role of nurses have been extended and they now run weekly illness recovery management groups for patients as a form of psycho-education, where they discuss mental illness, relapse prevention, coping skills, etc. The clinical pharmacist, part of the multidisciplinary team, goes beyond dispensing medicine to provide specialised services such as individualised medication psycho-education and counseling; monitor treatment outcomes like side effects and medication adherence; and screen for drug interactions. This contributes to better treatment outcomes overall.

Occupational therapists have also come on board. They conduct group-based Community Arts programmes, Sports & Exercise Groups, job preparation and vocational skills training sessions which focus on developing patients’ competencies so that they can rise above their condition. This was previously unavailable in the Alexandra BMC.

The multi-disciplinary Community Mental Health Team (CMHT) supporting the Western sector will operate from its base at the CWC (there are existing CMHTs managing the Eastern and Central sectors). The CMHT provides clinical services through home visits to patients, and managing a helpline.

Another important role of the CMHT is to collaborate with social service, health and government agencies – key stakeholders in the continuum of care, in order to reduce hospital readmissions and enhance the quality of life for patients living in the community. Engaging agencies like the CDCs, family service centres, Singapore Police Force and HDB is crucial in helping recovering patients re-integrate to society and lead purposeful lives.



**INSTITUTE
of
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Loving Hearts, Beautiful Minds

Buangkok Green Medical Park
10 Buangkok View
Singapore 539747
Tel: (65) 6389 2000
Fax: (65) 6389 1050
www.imh.com.sg

The CMHT will network and conduct case conferences with these agencies, and support them in managing or assisting persons with mental illness in the community.

The CWC will also provide continuing medical education to General Practitioners (GPs) in the vicinity as a form of training.

In terms of infrastructure, the CWC is designed based on one-piece flow principles to reduce waiting time and travelling around within the clinic. The clinic is also painted in earthy hues and fitted with cosy furniture for comfort during their visit. It is hoped that these efforts will contribute towards patient satisfaction.

In the period from Feb - Nov 2008, the CWC saw a monthly average of 1,872 patients. In the same period, the number of new patients per month averaged 66. 71.8% of new patients were referred from Singhealth and NHG polyclinics, suggesting that the polyclinics are aware of the treatment resources for mental-health related conditions at the CWC, and that it is a viable source for treatment referral.

Additionally, 10% of new patients were self-referred. This is a positive signal that members of the public feel comfortable to walk-in and seek treatment at the CWC.

Mr Leong Yew Meng, Chief Executive Officer of IMH, commented on the importance of community psychiatry, one of the initiatives under the National Mental Health Blueprint launched in 2007, " Right-siting of care for persons with mental illness is an area we are increasingly developing in IMH, and the CWC, with its enhanced services and improved facilities, is a testament to that."

Dr Lee Cheng, Chief of the Department of Community Psychiatry in IMH, emphasised, " With the CWC, our aims are not only to provide quality care to patients at their convenience, but engage relevant community agencies in partnership with us to achieve holistic results towards the patient's eventual rehabilitation and re-integration to society."

Mr Kong*, a patient in his late 30s receiving follow-up treatment for schizophrenia at the CWC shared, " In the past, I had to take an hour-long bus ride from my home in the West to Buangkok to see a psychiatrist in IMH. Now, I am happy that my travelling time has been cut by half since I have the option of seeing a psychiatrist at the CWC. I also enjoy the art and craft programmes here at CWC. "

* - Pseudonym

To arrange for interviews, please contact:

Ms Vera Soo
Senior Executive, Corporate Communications Department
Institute of Mental Health
Email: Vera_Soo@imh.com.sg
DID: 6389-2864
HP: 9655-2530



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About Institute of Mental Health/Woodbridge Hospital (IMH/WH)

The Institute of Mental Health/Woodbridge Hospital (IMH/WH) is a leading mental health centre in Asia offering a multi-faceted and comprehensive range of psychiatric, rehabilitative and counselling services designed to meet the needs of namely (i) children & adolescents, (ii) adults and (iii) the elderly. IMH/WH's multi-disciplinary approach to patient care is supported by the departments of Nursing, Clinical Psychology, Occupational Therapy, and Medical Social Work. Offering inpatient care and outpatient care, it has also established various satellite clinics around Singapore. IMH/WH provides community education and supports corporations in the promotion of mental health and wellness. As a specialist centre, it integrates research in the best interest of patient-care. For its outstanding contribution to research in health promotion, IMH's Early Psychosis Intervention Programme won the World Health Organization's inaugural State of Kuwait Prize in 2006 as well as one of the inaugural National Medical Excellence Awards conferred by the Ministry of Health in 2008. IMH/WH is the first mental health institution in Asia to receive the Joint Commission International (JCI) accreditation, an award that represents a worldwide consensus on quality patient care and international best practices. IMH/WH was recently re-accredited by the JCI in 2008.