

## **NEWS RELEASE**

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### **A COMPLETE MENTAL HEALTH COMMUNITY NETWORK FOR CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS ISLANDWIDE**

1. By the end of this year, all schools in Singapore will benefit from the support of REACH, a community-based mental health service set up to work closely with schools, community agencies and family doctors to help students with emotional, behavioural and developmental disorders. The latest REACH team of multi-disciplinary mental health professionals - comprising psychologists, medical social workers, occupational therapists and nurses from the National University Hospital - will serve 90 schools in the west school zone.
2. REACH was started in 2007 as a programme under the National Mental Health Blueprint, serving the mental health needs of children and adolescents of school-going age. The programme has been progressively rolled out in the north, south and east school zones, led by the Institute of Mental Health (IMH) in collaboration with the Ministry of Education (MOE), voluntary welfare organisations (VWOs), family doctors and the National Council of Social Services (NCSS).
3. The REACH teams work primarily with MOE school counselors and VWOs for early identification, support and intervention for children and adolescents with emotional and behavioural difficulties and related mental health problems in primary and secondary schools and junior colleges. The teams provide training, support and helpline assistance to the school counselors to identify and support these students aged 19 years and below. The teams also work with general practitioners in the community on the diagnoses and management of emotional and behavioural difficulties as well as related mental health problems. Since it was piloted in 12 schools in 2007, REACH has made significant progress and is currently serving 268 schools in three school zones (north, south and east). REACH West is the latest team and is based at NUH.

4. Said Associate Professor John Wong, Programme Director, REACH (West) at NUH, "The REACH (West) programme is a component of the strategic partnership between the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Health in school-based mental health promotion. Implemented by the National University Hospital and Institute of Mental Health, it is an important extension of community-based mental health support and care for our school children and teenagers in the western school zone of Singapore. This strategic programme testifies to the commitment of the partners investing in resources to provide our school children and their teachers with quicker access to mental health support and clinical services when required. More importantly, the focus on promoting emotional and mental well being will provide greater reach for the excellent school-based programmes MOE already has in place. We hope the new network will grow to reach the hearts and minds of children and adolescents, helping them to achieve greater emotional and mental well being!"
5. Since the REACH teams in the north, south and east were progressively set up from 2007, there were 685 children who were referred by school counselors to the REACH teams. These children showed an improvement after six months, according to feedback from their teachers. With the setting up of the REACH West team, more children will benefit from the early intervention to manage any mental health problems.
6. Ms Madeleine Ong, a full-time school counselor with Bendemeer Secondary School commented, "REACH has been a great help to our more challenging cases as we are able to get advice fast when we seek consultation through the REACH hotline. Interventions by the REACH team have been very useful as we see positive progress in the child."
7. Said Ms Janice Yim, a full-time school counselor with Qi Hua Primary School, "My experience with the REACH team has been a very positive and enriching one. REACH is professional and very accessible. REACH serves as a relevant support platform for the school, working with pupils with specific special needs and mental health issues."
8. "In addition to the collaboration between IMH and NUH, IMH is collaborating with the Department of Child Development (DCD) at KK Women's and Children's Hospital (KKH) to develop its mental health service to eventually support the east school zone of Singapore."

9. Prof Chay Oh Moh, Chairperson, Division of Medicine, KK Women's and Children's Hospital said: "This partnership between KKH DCD and REACH combines the clinical strengths of both paediatrics and psychiatry for the service of Singaporean school children. It facilitates a smooth transition of care when our DCD patients reach school-going age and require support for behavioural and mental health issues at school. It also helps us work closely with the REACH East team to assist those school children who are found to have learning problems. "
  
10. A/Prof Daniel Fung, Programme Director, REACH commented, "With the roll out of REACH programme to all the schools in the west zone by year end, schools and community agencies will be well supported to facilitate early detection and intervention of children with mental health needs."

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### **About the Institute of Mental Health**

The Institute of Mental Health (IMH) is the only tertiary psychiatric care institution in Singapore. Located on the sprawling 25-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 counseling services. The 2010-bedded hospital aims to meet the needs of three groups of patients – children and adolescents (age below 19 years), adults and the elderly. IMH also runs mental health education programmes for the general public. These programmes aim to promote mental wellness and raise awareness of the importance and benefits of prevention, early detection and treatment of mental disorders.

### **The National University Hospital**

The NUH is a tertiary specialist hospital and major referral centre for a wide range of medical and dental specialties including Cardiology, Gastroenterology and Hepatology, Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Oncology, Ophthalmology, Paediatrics and Orthopaedic Surgery.

A member of the National University Health System, it is the principal teaching hospital of the NUS Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine (YLL SoM).

With combined resources from the NUS YLL SoM and Faculty of Dentistry, the NUH is poised to meet the healthcare needs of patients, train future generations of doctors more effectively, and help develop solutions to our healthcare problems through research.

In 2007, the NUH was tasked by the Ministry of Health to develop two new national centres, the National University Cancer Institute, Singapore (NCIS) and the National University Heart Centre, Singapore (NUHCS) to meet the growing needs for cardiac and cancer treatment. The National University Cancer Institute, Singapore (NCIS) offers a broad spectrum of cancer care and management covering both paediatric and adult cancers. The National University Heart Centre, Singapore (NUHCS) brings together cardiac specialists and experts from a multitude of medical and surgical disciplines to provide a comprehensive and holistic approach to the treatment of heart problems.

In 2004, the NUH became the first Singapore hospital to receive Joint Commission International (JCI) Accreditation, an international stamp for excellent clinical practices in patient care and safety.

For more information, please visit [www.nuh.com.sg](http://www.nuh.com.sg)

**About KK Women's and Children's Hospital (to be confirmed)**

KK Women's and Children's Hospital (KKH) has evolved, since its founding in 1858, into a regional leader in Obstetrics, Gynaecology, Paediatrics and Neonatology. Today, the 830-bed JCI accredited hospital is a referral centre providing tertiary services to handle high-risk conditions in women and children. More than 400 specialists adopt a multi-disciplinary and holistic approach to treatment, and harness the latest innovations and technology for the best medical care possible. As an academic healthcare institution, the Hospital is a major teaching hospital for YLL SoM and DukeNUS GMS, and runs an ACGMEI accredited Paediatric Residency Programme.

The KKH Department of Child Development (DCD) with its multi-disciplinary team of paediatricians, psychologists and therapists seeks to deliver integrated holistic services with compassion, to children with developmental needs, supported by clinical excellence, education and innovation. DCD sees about 1800 children annually through Ministry of Health's Child Development Programme.

## ANNEX 1: ENGLISH-CHINESE GLOSSARY

Institute of Mental Health (IMH)	心理卫生学院
National University Hospital (NUH)	国大医院
REACH	社区心理健康反应, 初期治疗与评估计划
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