

MEDIA RELEASE

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CELEBRATING FIVE YEARS OF SMILES: NUCOHS SETS UP NEW GENERAL DENTAL PRACTITIONER NETWORK TO STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY DENTAL CARE

The National University Centre for Oral Health, Singapore commemorates its fifth anniversary with expanded plans to move dental care upstream through closer collaboration with general dental practitioners and community partners

SINGAPORE — 2024 marks the fifth year of the establishment of the National University Centre for Oral Health, Singapore (NUCOHS) as Singapore’s first and only national multidisciplinary dental centre that integrates clinical and research expertise with education service in a one-stop facility. The milestone was marked with a gala dinner held today, graced by Mr Masagos Zulkifli, Minister for Social and Family Development & Second Minister for Health, Minister-in-charge of Muslim Affairs.

In ensuring that Singapore residents of all ages are supported by a comprehensive dental care continuum to meet their oral health needs, NUCOHS has established a **General Dental Practitioner Network (NUCOHS – GDP Network)** since January 2024 to bring onboard and integrate General Dental Practitioners (GDPs) to strengthen the nation’s dental care ecosystem.

Strengthening community oral health beyond the hospital

The NUCOHS – GDP Network provides existing NUCOHS patients whose conditions have stabilised and no longer require tertiary-level dental care, the option to be referred to a participating GDP of their choice for regular follow-up care and maintenance of their oral health (refer to Annex A).

This initiative ensures a seamless transition for NUCOHS patients to a participating GDP located conveniently near their homes, allowing them to continue accessing affordable ongoing care while reducing travel time. With patient consent, the referred GDPs will also have access to their medical records and relevant radiographs or scans at NUCOHS, ensuring continuity of care and reducing duplicate tests or procedures.

The NUCOHS – GDP Network has started with 37 GDPs, who have joined the network after completing NUCOHS’ rigorous auditing process.

A/Prof Patrick Tseng, Executive Director, NUCOHS said: “Our General Dental Practitioners continue to be the bedrock of our nation’s oral healthcare and we will be expanding our efforts to bring onboard more partners, both in the western region and across Singapore. We want to form a close partnership with these primary care providers to enable seamless collaboration and ensure that patients can receive the most appropriate and timely care, in the right setting” added A/Prof Tseng.

GDPs in the network will also benefit from NUCOHS' continuous education programmes, which will strengthen professional development, especially in key areas such as the management of chronic dental diseases and complications. NUCOHS will also create more platforms and opportunities for GDPs, specialist care providers and community partners to connect, network and identify areas of synergy and collaboration.

Starting positive dental hygiene habits young plays a vital role in forming a basis for a lifetime of good oral health. In line with this, NUCOHS' Division of Paediatric Dentistry is working with preschools in the western region to launch a brand new programme.

From the third quarter of 2024, the Paediatric Clinic at NUCOHS will open its doors to visits by preschool children. The young participants will get the opportunity to discover what goes on behind the scenes in a consultation room, try out the various child-safe dental equipment and have fun learning the proper teeth brushing techniques. Through this initiative, NUCOHS aims to strengthen preventive dental care among the young population, providing them with a strong foundation for oral health.

Charting the digital future of dental care

NUCOHS is leading the way in dental innovation through strategic positioning as a one-stop centre for research, clinical and education. Since its inception, NUCOHS has been focusing on multi-disciplinary research to leverage science and technology in oral health.

The Centre has embarked on a long-term plan to push new frontiers in dental care using digital technology to improve the efficiency and accuracy of identifying, treating and preventing dental conditions. This initiative begins with creating **a dental imaging repository**, which captures the dental scans and records of NUCOHS patients. This repository aids in the development of treatment plans and the generation of data for ongoing and further research. Such research has far-reaching implications on the future of innovative dental treatments.

An example is the integrated use of computer-aided design and manufacturing (CAD/CAM) with the dental imaging repository, to improve the design and creation of dental restorations, such as dental prostheses, dentures and crowns. Besides achieving optimal aesthetics and functionality, this initiative can potentially result in more efficient workflow, fewer visits and shorter wait time, and a better overall patient experience.

NUCOHS is also working on the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) modelling with its electronic patient medical record system, to enhance early detection and prediction of dental conditions such as tooth decay and gum disease. The goal is to develop AI models suitable for use in the primary care setting, aiding in early treatment and preservation of dental functions, thus reducing the need for complex treatment. In the long term, this initiative aims to reduce dental healthcare burden on both the population and the public healthcare sector.

In summing up NUCOHS' journey in the last five years, A/Prof Patrick Tseng said: "At NUCOHS, we have always leveraged technology and research to provide patient-centred dental care. AI will play an increasingly important role in our practice, and by integrating AI and innovative research, we ensure that patients receive the most precise, efficient and appropriate care. Additionally, we hope to use our expansive data

to study links and impact of a patient’s systemic condition and the medications they are taking, on dental disease progression and the prognosis of treatment. As our population’s needs evolve, NUCOHS will continue to build upon its core strengths in specialised dental service, research and education, to transform and elevate our oral healthcare ecosystem.”

Chinese Glossary

National University Centre for Oral Health, Singapore (NUCOHS)	新加坡国立大学口腔医学中心 (国大口腔医学中心)
NUCOHS – General Dental Practitioner Network	国大口腔医学中心 - 全科牙医网络
Associate Professor Patrick Tseng Executive Director National University Centre for Oral Health, Singapore	曾承光副教授 国大口腔医学中心总主任

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About the National University Centre for Oral Health, Singapore

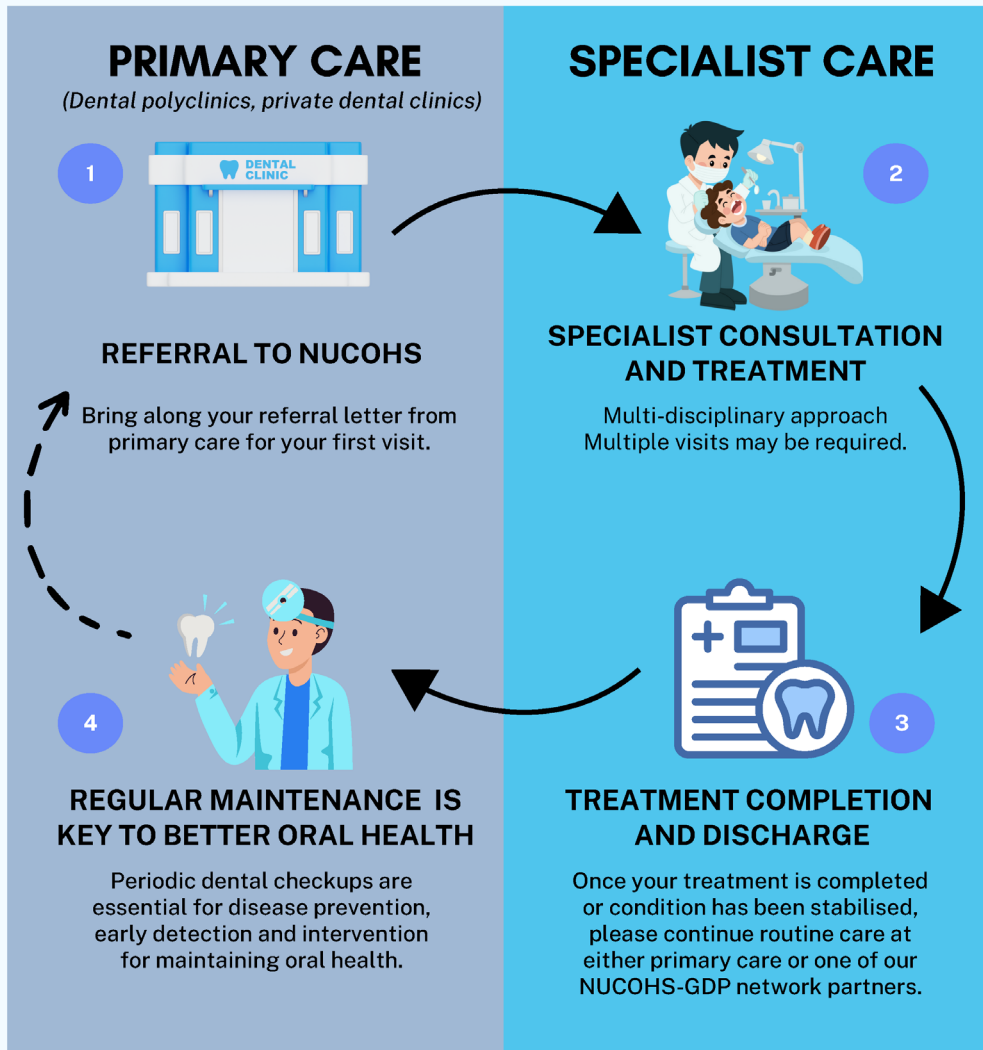
The National University Centre for Oral Health, Singapore (NUCOHS) is a national specialty centre that provides a comprehensive spectrum of dental care to manage oral, dental, and jaw-related conditions in patients across the lifespan. NUCOHS is also well poised to provide oral healthcare to the geriatric population as well as patients with special needs including those with complex medical conditions.

NUCOHS draws on the expertise of its clinicians and experts in the fields of Endodontics, Oral Maxillofacial Surgery, Orthodontics, Periodontics, Paediatric Dentistry and Prosthodontics, Geriatric Dentistry and Dental Public Health from the National University Hospital’s (NUH) University Dental Cluster (UDC) and the National University of Singapore (NUS) Faculty of Dentistry to operate within NUHS under an academic health centre governance model. Its vision is to transform oral health in Singapore, nurture the next generation of oral health professionals, and champion impactful multi-disciplinary research in oral health.

NUCOHS is one of the three national centres, along with the National University Cancer Institute, Singapore (NCIS) and the National University Heart Centre, Singapore (NUHCS), which form an integral part of the National University Health System (NUHS) in meeting the evolving specialised healthcare needs of the population in Singapore.

For more information, please visit: www.nucohs.com.sg

NUCOHS Patient Journey



Scan QR code for the list of our NUCOHS-GDP network partners