

GP-Community Hospitals partnership

in providing continued and integrated care for our elderly in the community

by Dr Andrew Wong (Associate Consultant)
Adeline Kwan (Senior Manager, OCEAN)
Joanne Lee (Executive, OCEAN)
(OCEAN: Office of Community Engagement and Education)

Primary care is the bedrock of our healthcare system. As one such provider, General Practitioners (GPs) are uniquely sited in the community to provide holistic care to all walks of life, spanning different age groups. This includes the elderly whose multiple biopsychosocial comorbidities renders them a higher risk of healthcare utilisations such as emergency visits and hospitalisations, further worsening their frailty and accelerating the disease trajectory. A dedicated approach is therefore required to break this vicious cycle.

In 2017, BrightVision Hospital started a pilot project named Integrated Primary Care for At-Risk Elderly (iPCARE). This programme augments long term primary care by supporting GPs with community hospital (CH) resources to GPs such as case managers and allied health professionals, in managing elderly patients with complex needs. Indeed, this pilot demonstrated that many patients and GPs are receptive towards the efforts of the community hospitals in establishing GPs as the patient-centred medical home in the community.

"I was introduced to this programme by Andrew Wong and Sara Chan when a couple of patients who live near my clinic were being discharged from Bright Vision Hospital. Our detailed communication allowed the conjoint care and management of complex chronic medical conditions. I am grateful whenever different parts of the health system collaborate and communicate because when that happens, patients and families are blessed with holistic care. Working with this team allows for enhanced motivation of patients to comply with treatment, more touch points for families to allay fear, and early detection of deterioration."

Dr Tan Poh Kiang, PJ Clinic

Having received encouraging feedback through this pilot, SingHealth Community Hospitals (SCH) will continue to implement iPCARE at its two other sites further to Bright Vision Hospital, namely Sengkang Community Hospital and Outram Community Hospital by 2021.

Key features of the iPCARE programme include:

- Recruitment of CH inpatients before discharge, who are interested to receive primary care from GPs, facilitated by case managers who are registered nurses
- Case management work which includes matching a suitable GP to the patient, and co-developing care plans with the GPs

- Provision of home visits and safety assessments, medicine reconciliation, allied health consultations, specific care procedures and coordinating community social services

"I support my elderly patients and GP partners with wound care, health and medication counselling, medications delivery and collaboration with our community partners. I also conduct home visits, help my patients to receive coordinated care at a GP near their home and regularly update our GP partners on the health status of our patients. This encourages consistent, continued and personalised primary care for our frail patients."

Sara Chan, Case Manager, SCH

"Working as a case manager is unique from my previous inpatient work. I engage my patients and caregivers at a deeper level and convey these concerns to my GP partners for greater effective and patient-centric care. My patients now better appreciate the role of their GP in chronic disease management and see them for both long-term and acute care needs."

Tristen Ong, Case Manager, SCH

"Having just to see one doctor for my father has been a seamless experience for me, as he has multiple conditions. Before we knew about this programme, we had to go to various doctors for follow-up appointments, and it was tough for me to balance work at the same time. Having to see the same doctor who is familiar with my father's condition has also been very useful as he truly understands what my father is going through from a holistic point of view."

Mr Jeffrey, son of iPCARE patient



Join us in the seminar "Complex Care by GPs" with GPs involved in iPCARE and Dr Andrew Wong, Associate Consultant, SingHealth Community Hospitals in May 2021! Stay tune to our Facebook post for more details: <https://m.facebook.com/SingHealthCH/>.

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