

# Alexandra Hospital

A member of the NUHS

## **AH's Specialist Surgical Centres and Operating Theatres Open and to Operate on More High-Volume, Common, Age-Related Conditions**

*Singapore, 15 July 2019* – The new Alexandra Hospital's Specialist Surgical Centres and Operating Theatre Services, spanning a floor area of 3,630 square metres, are fully open since last month, and set to take on high-volume, low-intensity, planned elective operations to ease the crunch of age-related procedures such as hernia, general eye conditions such as cataract, hearing loss and total knee replacement, which affect quality of life, for an increasingly ageing population. Patients with non-complex conditions will be right-sited to AH. There were a total of 4820 cases that were qualified for right siting at AH in 2018. This number is projected to increase to 6627 in year 2030 based on an estimated 3% year-on-year growth.

Alexandra Hospital (AH)'s full suite of specialist surgical services and centres complete with six operating theatres and two endoscopy suites are recently fully completed and operational. The specialist, consultant-only-led centres and services to care for all patients are as follows:

- a) Eye Surgery Centre
- b) ENT Centre
- c) General Surgery
- d) Orthopaedic Centre and Anaesthetic Outpatient Consultation Clinic
- e) Endoscopy Centre
- f) Dental Centre (2020)

AH's outpatient load for the Eye clinic alone had peaked to 400 clinic attendances per month, 165 at ENT clinic, 168 for Orthopaedic clinic and 128 for General Surgery clinic. Dr Wong Weng Hoa, Head of Surgical and Operating Theatre Services said, "There is a demand for higher-volume, common and age-related conditions to be operated on, as we continue to serve an ageing population." Close to 90% of the population still require general surgical services, especially for eye and ear, as well as knee joint conditions, which no one is spared their deterioration in severity over time and affects quality of life, and AH is poised to offer earlier treatment. AH can take additional load with ramping up our capacity. AH is on target to open up to 300 beds next year.

The sources of AH patients for these surgical services come from:

- a) Referrals from other hospitals
- b) Referrals from GPs
- c) Referrals from Polyclinics (which indicates the shortest wait time for appointment)
- d) Walk-ins through AH's 24/7 Urgent Care Centre

- e) Self-call-and-book appointment

There are a few unique firsts and differential features of AH's Specialist Centres vis-à-vis tertiary hospitals:

### **AH's General Surgery:**

- a) The centre is operating on more age-related conditions such as gastro, hernia, piles, gall bladder, anal fissures conditions. The FIT kit check for colorectal cancer through HPB's referral, if results are positive, now has the **shortest direct access** to AH's Endoscopy Centre where the first scope can be scheduled within three days after the doctor's first consultation. Time is of the essence here, because colorectal cancer is number one most common cancer in Singapore.

### **AH's Orthopaedic Centre:**

- b) AH's specialist centres are staffed by specialist-consultants with their own sub-specialists, but whom are required to cover the entire scope of specialist surgical services at AH. In line with AH's tagline as the Integrated General Hospital which offers one and the same primary doctor care model in the outpatient setting, the patient receives constant, familiar care from only one doctor. This is the vision of providing patient-centric care." Dr Chua whose sub-specialty is in TKR, are seeing more elderly patients with multiple joint conditions such as hip, shoulder with knee.
- c) In line with the Alexandra Hospital's Integrated General Hospital (IGH) model of providing same-bed without transfers from admission, treatment to rehabilitative care, after an orthopaedic operation has been performed, AH shaves off about 1.5 days of wait time otherwise used for paperwork to transfer the patient to step-down care at a community hospital. The IGH model is combatting the problems faced by today's tertiary hospitals, which essentially for the patient are two things: 1) minimize unnecessary transfers to other care settings and 2) to reduce re-admission and length of stay. The patient is not moved, there is no hand-off to a different care team, and rehabilitation can start sooner after two days fresh from an operation. This ensures better patient outcome and recovery due to timeliness. Once patient is better the next day in the ward, he can commence rehabilitation immediately on the same bed in the same hospital with the same care team.
- d) AH's Orthopaedic Centre is now aiming to prepare for same-day TKR operation and discharge through building its Allied Health Services and strategizing stronger links through its Community Strategy Workgroup with the community, where post discharge care is well integrated with the community. More telemedicine will also be deployed, including telehealth. The team is also looking into how motivated the patient is, the perioperative period and post-op care, the type of anaesthesia and pain-killers used, how soon the home rehab can start,

the support at home, etc., in order to shorten the inpatient stay, easing bed demand and reducing cost and risk of hospital bug.

- e) Co-location of the Anaesthetic Outpatient Consultation Clinic inside the Orthopaedic Centre itself, is unique, of which purpose is for ease of assessing immobile patients more than 65 years of age, and with multiple comorbidities as they are assessed and prepared for operation.

### **AH's Eye Surgery Centre:**

- a) The number of patients with eye conditions such as cataract, age-related macula degeneration and glaucoma is expected to increase amongst an ageing population. Cataract surgery is the one most common surgery that Singaporeans encounter in our adult lives. Everyone will get cataracts. It's a matter of the severity. Typically, people develop cataracts at around 60 years of age. Some younger. Eye Surgery Centre headed by Dr Paul Zhao explains that the focus at his centre will be to see patients with stable eye conditions. By focusing predominantly on cataract surgery, the doctors and staff are able to work towards standardisation and streamlining of processes. This can only lead to more predictable surgical outcomes, faster throughput of patients and increased productivity. "With patient's whose eye conditions are stable, it is less likely for unplanned investigations to be ordered at each visit. This allows us to better plan the utilisation of our clinic resources such that clinic efficiency is maximised and patient waiting times during each clinic visit is shortened. Stable patients can be transferred to the new eye centre at AH, thereby easing some of the load and increasing the capacity for the more complex cases to be seen at larger tertiary hospitals." said Dr Zhao. The centre also sees cornea and external eye diseases, general eye wellness, glaucoma and vitreo retinal diseases.
- b) Currently, the short wait time for first appointment at the centre as with the other centres in AH, are all as fast as immediate walk-in (if clinics are in session) to no more than five working days. The same goes for the first eye procedure after consultation. The target for the centre is less than 5 working days. The centre has a unique one-stop time-saving workflow which is a literal loop carepath, from registration, admission, operation, recovery and appointment follow-up in just 90 minutes. This is considerably and comparatively faster, smoother, easier and more convenient for patients, than tertiary hospitals.
- c) The centre has also deployed leading-edge pre-cataract tools such as the use of iTrace for the implant of special lens for cataract patients with high astigmatism, which can help bring about less over and under correction and overall, better patient experience and outcome.

### **AH ENT Centre:**

Older Singaporeans who lose their hearing are 2.3 times more likely to develop mild cognitive impairment or dementia, a local study has recently found. Age is the most common cause of hearing impairment. It gets worse as one grows older, and everyone will have some hearing problem. AH's Deputy Head of ENT Centre, A/Prof Mark Thong said his centre responds to patient needs in terms of shortening wait times and perform

- High volume, low intensity planned elective procedures/ops and inpatient / inflight cases which address an increasing demand for age-related ENT services esp. hearing.

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### **About Alexandra Hospital:**

Alexandra Hospital (AH) is taken over by National University Health System (NUHS) from 1 June 2018. The 326-bedder Alexandra Hospital (starting with 176 beds first) provides seamless, one-stop comprehensive care by one care team to some 100,000 residents in the Queenstown precinct (the oldest housing estate) and Southwest and the rest of Singapore.

Alexandra Hospital is the first Integrated General Hospital in Singapore providing holistic and seamless care from acute, sub-acute to rehabilitative settings, reducing the need for a patient to transfer to another healthcare institution. Our clinical model is team-led and programme-based. This means that every patient who comes to Alexandra Hospital will be placed under at least one of our five core clinical programmes, and be taken care by a single doctor and the same care team, under one of these programmes.

Our five clinical programmes are:

- Be Better (Preventive Care)
- Get Better (Acute Care)
- Live Better (Chronic Care)
- Age Better (Healthy Ageing)
- Cope Better (Palliative Care) (coming soon)

Through CareHub@AH, the hospital's Care Managers assist patients, families with the help of community partners so that medical and social help can be planned and provided to those who need it and continuously by primary care providers, thereby empowering them to stay healthy at home and in the community.

AH has a 24/7 walk-in Urgent Care Centre and it is also the site for staging innovative health and care as well as person-centric solutions with a view to enabling best practices to be scoped, shared and scaled. It will be technology-enabled. Together with the community, bring about seamless integrated care beyond discharge, and enabling continuity of care anchored in the safety and comfort of the home and community.

Visit us at [www.ah.com.sg](http://www.ah.com.sg). Follow us on FaceBook: <http://fb.me/AlexandraHospitalSG>