

The CGH-SACH Integrated Building Is Officially Opened by President Tony Tan Keng Yam

The 280-bed facility incorporates special ‘mock-up apartments’ to help prepare patients for return home – a ‘first’ in Singapore; three other high-tech solutions deployed at The IB are also national firsts.

23 July 2015 – The Integrated Building, a 280-bed facility jointly operated by Changi General Hospital (CGH) and St. Andrew’s Community Hospital (SACH), was officially opened by President Tony Tan Keng Yam today, with Health Minister Gan Kim Yong and other dignitaries present. Caring for more than 1,500 patients since January 2015, ‘The IB’ features nine wards and numerous rehabilitation and outpatient facilities.

The IB is the first purpose built facility in Singapore jointly run by an acute hospital (CGH) and a community hospital (SACH). The IB is focused on providing optimised rehabilitation for patients, especially those who are elderly or recovering from stroke or traumatic injuries. The IB features a comprehensive range of diagnostic and rehabilitation facilities with an emphasis on providing a pleasant home-like environment to help facilitate our patients’ transition back to home and the community.

“The Integrated Building is more than just a sharing of physical infrastructure. It is about changing mind-sets, improving processes of care and optimising rehabilitation for our patients recovering from injury or illness, so that they can ultimately get on with their lives in the community. Today’s event is a special milestone as both CGH and SACH grow in interdependence and work as part of the Eastern Health Alliance, so that our care truly restores health, is timely, is kind, provides hope and is continuous and coordinated.” Dr. Loh Yik Hin, Chief Executive Officer, SACH said.

The IB’s design and care processes have been designed to help patients recover their functional ability and independence as much as possible before they return home. The IB’s wider corridors, terraces, dining areas, and therapy gardens encourage and motivate patients to get out of bed, move around more, and undergo their therapy in a conducive environment.

‘Mock-up Apartments’ for Real-life Preparation

SACH has also set up a Centre for Independent Living (CIL), which consist of a Back-to-Home Training Flat and an occupational therapy gymnasium. Each day, patients are brought to the CIL to practise activities of daily living at the CIL’s training flat and for strengthening

exercises at the main therapy gymnasium. In addition, Occupational Therapists also advise patients and caregivers on suitable home modifications and provide caregiver training at the mock-up apartment.

Selected CGH patients warded at The IB who live alone or with elderly caregivers, can now stay overnight in one of the two Transitional Living Units, or special 'mock apartments' located within CGH's wards prior to their discharge. During their stay in these apartments, they learn and practice how to care for themselves at home (caregivers can stay with them and practise as well), while the rehabilitation team assesses their readiness for home. This innovation in care is a Singapore first, and seeks to meet a critical need in Singapore due to its ageing population and the increase in number of elderly persons living alone or with ageing caregivers.

CGH CEO, Dr Lee Chien Earn explained: "Enabling recovering stroke or trauma patients to stay overnight at our 'mock apartments' before going home is a bold and innovative example of care at The IB. Our focus is on getting our patients ready for life beyond the hospital; we want to get our patients home in the best condition possible. Besides innovations in physical infrastructure and care delivery, we have also leveraged on new technology to improve care, increase productivity and enhance patient safety."

The IB – A Technology Innovation Hotbed

A number of new technologies have been deployed at The IB.

For example, to enhance patient care, patient hoist systems are used to assist healthcare staff in transferring patients, and also to help support the weight of some patients when they undergo therapy.

In another example, SACH's Day Rehabilitation Centre at The IB features the Augmented Reality Games for Therapy and Floor Projection System for Gait and Balance Training, which trains patients' limbs using interactive computer games. Complementing conventional therapies in interesting and meaningful ways for patients, the innovations are a result of SACH's collaboration with Singapore Polytechnic, in a Temasek Cares – Technology assisted Rehabilitation in the Community Programme, initiated by Temasek Cares and the Agency for Integrated Care.

Beyond these, CGH has also introduced three first-in-Singapore high-tech solutions at The IB that improves productivity.

First, the Medical Devices Interface (MDI) enables medical information – such as blood pressure or heart rate – to be automatically captured into electronic medical record

systems, replacing the old process where staff had to record, and then transcribe results manually into electronic systems. The MDI is currently being used in both CGH and SACH wards.

Second, a hands-free communicator system equips each healthcare staff with small voice-activated devices that enable them to quickly and reliably contact each other, for example, to ask for assistance to support an unsteady patient while attending to the patient

A third solution, trackless autonomous transporter robots, helps move specimens and medicines throughout the facility, which saves manpower and time in a simple and practical way

CEO CGH Dr Lee added, “We have introduced these technological innovations to synergise with the infrastructural innovations to enhance the care experience and outcomes of our patients. For example, the Medical Device Interface and Hands Free Communicator system enable our nurses to spend more quality time with patients. We are actively assessing to see how these solutions can be deployed, eventually, across the entire CGH campus.”