

## HEALTHCARE

2007 EXSA WINNERS	TOTAL AWARDS*
<b>SINGAPORE HEALTH SERVICES (SINGHEALTH)</b>	
Changi General Hospital	131
KK Women's & Children's Hospital	275
Singapore General Hospital	900
National Cancer Centre (Singapore)	20
National Dental Centre	18
National Heart Centre Pte Ltd	148
Singapore National Eye Centre	40
SingHealth Polyclinics	124
<b>NATIONAL HEALTHCARE GROUP</b>	
Alexandra Hospital	35
Institute of Mental Health	129
National Healthcare Group Pharmacy	96
National Healthcare Group Polyclinics	78
National Skin Centre	11
National University Hospital	425
Tan Tock Seng Hospital	249
<b>OTHERS</b>	
Mount Alvernia Hospital	3
Thomson Medical Centre Ltd	46
UMC Service Master Pte Ltd	9

\*Refers to the total number of Star, Gold and Silver awards

# 'I'll do all I can to help'

By AHMAD OSMAN

HELPING other people is a natural instinct for Miss Janet Khoo, a 50-year-old veteran nurse clinician in Singapore General Hospital's (SGH) specialist outpatient obstetrics and gynaecology centre.

There are two outstanding examples of the compassion and empathy driving the single busy health-care professional — who does not have much time for herself — to go beyond her normal duties to help patients and colleagues.

After she finished her work one day, she delivered antibiotics to an illiterate woman from China as she could not get another person to take her to the SGH to collect the medication to treat an infection.

She also provided a woman colleague from Hong Kong and her two children free accommodation for three months in her Housing and Development Board flat.

The colleague continued to work as a health-care assistant while she was waiting for the children to complete their school term before the family left Singapore to join the woman's husband.

He had to sell their house here when he was posted to another country. Miss Khoo lived with her parents while her guests were staying in her apartment.

"I have been helping people since I joined the SGH some 30 years ago," she says.

"It is not a big deal for me and I don't expect anything in return.

"As long as my mind and body can do it, I will continue to do whatever I can to help people.

"Nurses have empathy and compassion for people. How much empathy and compassion is the yardstick of service excel-



PHOTO: JAMIE KOH

Miss Khoo (left) goes beyond the call of duty to help colleagues and patients and does not "expect anything in return".

lence in health care.

"My family says I am trying to do too much, working more for more than 12 hours in a day to take care of my patients and colleagues.

"But my attitude is, if you need my assistance, I will do whatever I can to help you. I don't have much spare time for myself and if I need a break, I go on a holiday out of Singapore and away from my work."

Supporting and mentoring junior nurses and doctors are part of her duties. Miss Khoo is the deputy general secretary of the Healthcare Services Employees' Union.

She is a member of the Singapore Nursing Board's obstetrics and gynaecology nurses chapter and a recipient of the Excellent

Service Award in the silver, gold and star categories.

She also won the Comrade of Labour award, given by the National Trades Union Congress, last year.

"Her accomplishment in service excellence has set a good example to her staff to excel in patient care and service quality," says the SGH director of nursing, Ms Lim Swee Hia.

Miss Khoo goes the extra mile to provide genuine care and assistance to patients who need her help, says Ms Jarojah Narayanasamy, the SGH's senior nurse manager of specialist outpatient clinics.

Mr Yeo Han Seng, the senior manager of specialist outpatient clinics, also praises Miss Khoo's commitment to service quality

and the welfare of her staff.

He says: "Her door is always open to people who need help or advice. She looks after the welfare of her subordinates.

"Her compassion, sense of humility and thoughtfulness, made it possible for a foreign staff member and her family to have a roof above their heads when she realised that her colleague had sold her house and planned to return to Hong Kong for good.

"Janet deliberately moved back to her parents' place and offered free accommodation to the family in her own apartment.

"This act of compassion relieved the family of the difficulty of finding a temporary place to stay before their departure from Singapore."

Delivering excellent service in healthcare requires more than just professional competence and a pleasant personality. Excellence in healthcare service delivery comes from the heart, a commitment to see to the needs of all our patients and their family members, as well as the colleagues who work together as a team. The care delivered must be provided in a holistic way with compassion and empathy, ensuring that it is timely with best possible clinical outcomes. I am proud of every Exsa winner as they are shining examples of dedication and compassion that set them apart from other professionals of the service industry.

PROF TAN SER KIAT,  
GROUP CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER,  
SINGAPORE HEALTH SERVICES