The Future of Nursing
Transforming Care
Innovating with Technology & Research
Specialist Tracks • Continuing Education
Delivering Care in the Community
Empowering Patients and Caregivers

SingHealth DukeNUS
ACADEMIC MEDICAL CENTRE
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Foreword

It is an exciting time to be a nurse. With the changing healthcare landscape, nurses have so many dynamic and fulfilling career opportunities across different care settings.

Nurses now go beyond hospital walls to deliver preventive healthcare in the community and help residents age in place. They work closely with community partners to ensure that patients remain well-supported as they are discharged from hospital to return home. There is also a wealth of training opportunities to enable nurses to deepen their knowledge and gain future-ready skills to meet the needs of our population.

Looking ahead, we see that technology and work redesign will allow nurses to spend more time on direct patient care and take on more complex roles. While advancements can help improve care delivery, nothing can substitute the care and comfort that nurses provide to patients and their caregivers.

In this magazine, we look at how SingHealth nurses play an active role in care transformation. The stories reflect that nursing is more than just a job – it’s a calling.

This Nurses’ Day, I applaud all nurses for rising to the many challenges and pushing boundaries to improve care. Thank you, for always looking out for what matters most to our patients and their loved ones. You make a positive difference to so many lives, each and every day.

Happy Nurses’ Day!

Dr Tracy Carol Ayre
Group Chief Nurse
SingHealth
Working as a nurse in the Major Operating Theatre (MOT) at Singapore General Hospital is not for the faint-hearted. The hospital sees an average of 140 surgical cases across 26 OTs in a day. In addition to multitasking, MOT nurses must be meticulous and think fast on their feet! We asked nurses to show us how they navigate a high intensity day at the MOT.

“LIFE IN THE THEATRE

Senior Staff Nurse Lim Han Ying’s day typically starts with checking that all the equipment and instrument sets required for the surgeries listed are available and in good working condition. The team, which comprises the surgeon, anaesthetist, scrub nurses, circulating nurses, anaesthesia nurse and healthcare attendant then gathers for a team briefing to go through the list of scheduled surgeries.

As an Obstetrics and Gynaecology nurse, some of the operations that she is involved in include caesarean sections and hysterectomies. For the first surgery of the day, Han Ying is assigned as a scrub nurse where her role is to assure that all the instruments required are ready and prepare to assist the surgeon during the procedure. Sometimes, she is assigned to be a circulating nurse where she assists the team with various tasks, depending on the needs of the surgery.

8:00am
Hello, Team

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8:20am
Checking In

Before the first patient enters the Operating Theatre (OT), Han Ying and the anaesthesia nurse, Senior Staff Nurse Siow Yu Wai, do a check in the induction room to ensure that the right patient is going for the right procedure. Going for surgery can be nerve-wracking. Han Ying uses this time to reassure the patient and soothe her anxiety.

8:30am
Preparing for Surgery

After the patient is wheeled into the OT, Han Ying straps the patient securely on the operating table, as Yu Wai assists the anaesthetist to intubate the patient and administer anaesthesia. Yu Wai also prepares any equipment and drugs required and helps to monitor the patient’s condition throughout the surgery.
Han Ying focuses on what the surgeon is doing to anticipate what instruments are needed at different stages of the procedure. This is where a good foundation in anatomy is really important as it helps to ensure that everything goes smoothly. Close to the end of the surgery, she does a count of all the instruments, gauze, swabs and towels used with the circulating nurse. Each one must be accounted for. The surgeon waits for the count to be done before he closes the wound.

After the surgery, each member of the team must complete their own checks and documentation. Important information such as skin integrity issues and any special needs of the patient are passed on to nurses like Senior Staff Nurse Eleena Roslan in the Post-Anaesthesia Care Unit (PACU). Aside from a pre-anesthesia chart with details of the patient’s medical history, Han Ying also hands over care instructions for Eleena to relay to the ward nurses. On average, a patient stays in the PACU for about two hours before being transferred to the ward.

Taking breaks is really important as the hours can get really long in the OT. Han Ying uses the time to take a step back from her hectic day. When there is a very challenging case, she always turns to Nurse Clinician Tan Shi Wei for advice and to decompress.

After her break, Han Ying scrubs in for another procedure. Before the surgery starts, she carefully checks the instruments and equipment that will be used. On average, Han Ying is involved in 4 to 6 surgeries daily before her shift ends at about 5pm.

We are masters of non-verbal communication. Since our faces are covered by masks, we communicate with our eyes and gestures. With enough experience, we can tell what the surgeon needs without any verbal cues!

A single surgery may involve more than ten medical professionals. As OT nurses, we must have good problem-solving and interpersonal skills to ensure that every operation goes smoothly.
Going overseas on study trips and work attachments broadened perspectives and helped these nurses discover what they are made of.

**Aidila Ismail**  
Nurse Clinician  
National Heart Centre Singapore

**Six-week attachment funded by MOH’s Health Manpower Development Plan**  
# travellingforwork #royalfreehospital  
#hammersmithhospital

My attachment with the Royal Free Hospital Pulmonary Hypertension Centre and Hammersmith Hospital in the UK, came at the right time because of the growing number of pulmonary hypertension patients we’re seeing at NHCS. While I was there, I learned about advances in evidence-based practice to manage the disease, acquired new skills and knowledge on the latest therapy and observed patient education programmes.

The attachment also helped me better understand why some patients need regular monitoring and supportive therapies (physical, psychological, spiritual and social), to manage issues that arise as a result of their condition. The exposure gave me new perspectives and helped me adopt a different approach when assessing patients’ needs and concerns. I now feel more confident when caring for patients with pulmonary hypertension.

**Tay Sze En**  
Senior Staff Nurse  
Changi General Hospital

Scholarship: Australian Imperial Force (AIF)  
Malaya Nursing Scholarship (Bachelor of Science)  
#overseasstudy #curtinuniversity #backtoschool

Going to Perth to study for nine months was a temporary life reset, which I welcomed as studying abroad was on my bucket list.

The atmosphere at Curtin University was very conducive to learning. Students were proactive in speaking up in class and I enjoyed the exchange of ideas and opinions. It was a good opportunity to be exposed to different nursing care disciplines and practices. Coming from a background of surgical orthopaedic nursing, I learnt so much during my clinical attachment when I was attached to the lung transplant specialty at Fiona Stanley Hospital.

I was challenged to embrace differences, be open to change and reflect on my old practice and mentality. I also became more confident about introducing interventions that improve nursing care.
Working in the gynaecological oncology wards and clinics, I provide both nursing and psychosocial care to patients. For my PhD, I decided to focus on preoperative preparation, which aims to optimise patients’ condition before surgery.

It is not easy to study while juggling the responsibilities of a family and a full-time career, but I believe nurses should never stop learning.

During the eighteen months of my PhD programme, I made several trips to Duke University, USA, for a week each time to attend lectures and presentations. The experience changed how I plan and accomplish my goals and overcome challenges.

It was very gratifying to set up the Advanced Practice Nurse (APN)-led Preoperative Assessment and Education Clinic in October 2014. Together with three other APNs, we collaborate with anaesthetists, gynaecologists, dietitians, physiotherapists and medical social workers to review and optimise the condition of gynaecological cancer patients before their surgery. The interventions have helped to shorten length of hospital stay and improve overall patient experience.

Dr Huang Fang
Advanced Practice Nurse and Assistant Director, Nursing
KK Women’s and Children’s Hospital

Scholarship: SingHealth Doctorate of Nursing Practice Scholarship
#doctoratestudies #duke #gynaecology

Anwar Shiddiq Bin Mohd Ali
Senior Staff Nurse
Sengkang General Hospital

Six-week attachment funded by MOH’s Health Manpower Development Plan
#overseasattachment #sunnybrookhealthsciencecentre #maplecountry #orthopaedics

Training at Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre, the largest trauma hospital in Toronto, was a dream come true for me. It gave me the chance to learn how they manage post-op pain for patients with lower limb trauma and how to help them transit back to the community.

It was interesting to see that Sunnybrook, like Sengkang General Hospital (SKH), also places emphasis on interprofessional partnerships between nurses, doctors and allied health professionals. I also found that exchanging the latest nursing interventions and evidence-based practice with overseas counterparts promotes open sharing of ideas, which was mentally stimulating.

When I came back to Singapore, I worked with a multi-disciplinary team to start an “early mobilisation algorithm” initiative at SKH, which categorises patients according to the level of assistance they require to move around after hip surgery. Instead of physiotherapists doing the initial assessment, nurses can now assess patients’ needs and facilitate their mobilisation. This speeds up our patients’ rehabilitative journey and reduces complications.
Beyond Hospital Walls

Eyes on the Community
Lim Sock Huang, Nurse Manager
Singapore National Eye Centre (SNEC)

Since 2000, SNEC has been organising the National Eye Care Day annually to promote eye health awareness through talks and free eye screenings. We also reach out by bringing eye screening to the elderly with the SNEC Mobile Eye Bus. My role is to help the elderly understand the types of eye diseases and the importance of early detection, while optometrists administer a basic eye test to screen for conditions like cataract and glaucoma on the bus. The Eye Bus is a great way to promote greater awareness of eye health in the heartlands.

Just a Call Away
Sara Chan, Senior Staff Nurse
Bright Vision Hospital (BVH)

As a senior nurse and case manager supporting the Integrated Primary Care for At-Risk Elderly (iPCARE) programme, I follow up with patients who have complex medical and social needs to ensure that they are adequately cared for at home after their discharge. The programme aims to provide these patients with holistic care to minimise unnecessary emergency department visits and hospital re-admissions.

I regularly call them and make home visits to monitor their progress. When their conditions are stabilised, I match them with GP partners near their homes so they can receive regular care. I always tell my patients that if they encounter any problems, I am just a call away.

Care in the Community
Li Wei, Advanced Practice Nurse
National Neuroscience Institute (NNI)

Parkinson's Disease (PD) is a degenerative disease that requires long-term treatment. It not only affects patients' movements but may also cause conditions such as postural hypotension and depression, which affects their quality of life. This led us to start a nurse-led home care service for at-risk patients who have poor social support or are bed-bound.

We also work with community care partners to train their staff. Through monthly meetings and workshops, nurses and allied health professionals from 24 intermediate and long-term care agencies and voluntary welfare organisations have been trained under our Community Care Partner Programme.
Nurses work with community partners to provide better access to healthcare.

The Health Mythbuster
Jamaliah Bte Jamil, Assistant Nurse Clinician
SingHealth Polyclinics (SHP)

I am part of the Primary Healthcare and Chronic Disease Management team of family medicine physicians and nurses. We conduct talks on chronic diseases such as diabetes, hypertension and asthma at libraries and community centres. Some of the skills we teach include how to monitor blood sugar or blood pressure and how to correctly use asthma inhalers. The talks are usually conducted in small groups, giving us more time to address questions and allowing participants to share their experiences for peer support.

Creating Awareness about Cancer
Teo Lay Cheng, Senior Staff Nurse
National Cancer Centre Singapore (NCCS)

“How do I prevent cancer?”, “Is cancer contagious?”, these are some of the common questions asked when I conduct cancer awareness talks at schools and community events. We often support these events with the NCCS Cancer Education Bus, which is decked out with interactive games, videos and information panels to engage the old and the young.
The nursing profession offers opportunities to specialise in clinical, management, education, nursing informatics and research career tracks.
ONE PROFESSION, DIFFERENT PATHS

Learn how five nurses have found growth and fulfilment in their chosen path.

RESEARCH

Identifying areas of improvement through research and collecting data can be tedious, but knowing that the results have the potential to improve care gives me a real sense of accomplishment.

Toh Zhi Qi
Staff Nurse
KK Women’s and Children’s Hospital

CLINICAL

I manage critically ill patients in the Intensive Care Unit. Having a sharp and discerning mind is critical, but to deliver the best care to patients with life-threatening conditions, you need a compassionate heart. In addition to my clinical duties, I also train junior doctors and nurses on critical care management.

Tan Poh Choo
Advanced Practice Nurse
Changi General Hospital

EDUCATION

To do well as a Nurse Educator, you need passion, experience and a strong drive to learn. If you don’t have passion, it will show when you interact with your students. Clinical experience helps relate lessons to real-life situations. You always need to keep up with the latest developments in nursing to ensure that you provide quality training.

Joanne Anthony
Nurse Educator
Singapore General Hospital

NURSING INFORMATICS

Nursing informatics is a dynamic field that combines my interests in technology and nursing, and allows me to find innovative ways to improve care delivery. My colleagues and I were responsible for testing and deploying all medical equipment and systems and conducting staff training before the opening of Sengkang General Hospital in 2018. I am proud that we completed the implementation successfully.

Ong Chin Wan
Nurse Clinician
Sengkang General Hospital

MANAGEMENT

I lead a team of nurses to provide safe care to our patients. Being able to communicate effectively is essential as it helps make work processes smoother. Managing people is never easy, but I believe in listening with an open mind and staying positive to understand situations and people better.

Foo Lee Lian
Assistant Director, Nursing
National Heart Centre Singapore

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National Heart Centre Singapore
At KK Women’s and Children’s Hospital, Advanced Practice Nurse Xu Xue Lian runs the Women’s Anaesthesia Clinic with a team of anaesthetists. The clinic is where patients are reviewed before they go for elective surgery. As a certified collaborative prescribing practitioner, Xue Lian is qualified to prescribe from a list of approved medications, without needing a doctor’s endorsement.

In addition to her clinic duties, Xue Lian works with the anaesthetists in the Operating Theatre to administer medication during surgery. After surgery, she reviews patients in the recovery unit and wards, where she prescribes medication to minimise pain and side effects of anaesthesia, when needed.

“Having prescribing rights has enabled me to administer on-time treatment to ease patients’ pain and discomfort,” she says.

With more than 20 years of experience under her belt, Xue Lian observes that the role of nurses has expanded over the years. “We have more training opportunities that empower us to take on more clinical responsibilities. With greater autonomy, we can do more for our patients.”

**A World of Possibilities:**

Find all 30 nursing specialities

- Breast Care
- Cardiac Nursing
- Critical Care
- Diabetes
- Emergency
- Haematology
- Infection Control
- Infectious Diseases
- Medical Nursing
- Mental Health
- Midwifery and Gynaecology
- Neonatology
- Neurology and Neurosurgery
- Nutrition Support
- Oncology
- Ophthalmology
- Orthopaedic
- Osteoporosis and Bone Metabolism
- Paediatric and Neonatal
- Pain Management
- Palliative Care
- Perioperative Nursing
- Radiology Nursing
- Renal
- Rehabilitation
- Rheumatology and Immunology
- Stoma Care
- Surgical Nursing
- Transitional Care
- Urology
- Wound Management

**THE NURSE IS IN**
**TIME OUT!**

Two groups of nurses share how they unwind after a busy day at work.

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**DANCE**

Graceful and dynamic – those are the words used to describe the Ambulatory Treatment Unit (ATU) Fairies when they made their dance debut at SingHealth Nursing’s outreach programme in 2017.

Performing a fusion dance that combined folk dance and Chinese dance set to a Middle Eastern melody, the performance earned the dance group rave reviews.

“We were surprised that the audience thought we were professional dancers!” recalled Xiao Yu Lian, Senior Staff Nurse, National Cancer Centre Singapore (NCCS), who started the group with three other nurses.

Besides the joy of doing something they love, dancing has also helped them work better as a team at the clinic where they look after cancer patients and administer chemotherapy treatment.

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**SILAT**

When siblings Nurul Jannah, Muhsin and Nurul Iffah first enrolled in silat classes, they were only in primary school. Their parents just wanted to keep them occupied and have the kids bond over a shared hobby.

Twenty years on, the three siblings are now accomplished silat practitioners who have won various national-level tournaments. All three of them work as nurses at Singapore General Hospital (SGH).

Muhsin is a Young Master in his silat club – where he mentors members who are taking part in competitions and performances. Both he and Nurul Jannah are also certified instructors.

“Silat has taught us discipline, time management and patience, which are important in our work as nurses,” said Muhsin, Staff Nurse at SGH Ward 46.

Nurul Iffah who is a Staff Nurse at SGH Emergency Department echoed his thoughts. She is a member of the hospital’s Code White team, which is activated to stabilise aggressive patients and prevent them from harming themselves, staff or other patients. She finds that her martial arts training comes in handy.

“Years of silat training has taught me to be calm, confident and collected in intense situations,” she said.

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From left: 
Xiao Yu Lian, Senior Staff Nurse; Quah Shu Ying, Staff Nurse; Huang Ke, Senior Staff Nurse and Bernadette Tagalog, Senior Staff Nurse

From left: 
Nurul Iffah Bte Mansor, Staff Nurse; Muhsin Bin Mansor, Staff Nurse and Nurul Jannah Bte Mansor, Senior Staff Nurse

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The ATU Fairies meet weekly after work to choreograph and practice for upcoming performances. Their most memorable event took place last November, at the annual NCCS Charity Dinner, where President Halimah Yacob was the Guest of Honour.
Loneliness, denial, depression, and lack of confidence – these are some issues amputees may face after the devastating loss of their limbs. Many feel isolated and resign themselves to not being able to venture out into the community again.

Since 1999, the nurse-led Amputee Support Group at Singapore General Hospital (SGH) has been working tirelessly to help patients who have lost their limbs. The group currently led by Assistant Nurse Clinician Nur Raudhah, comprises nurses from different specialties, occupational therapists, physiotherapists and medical social workers.

The support group organises two outings a year to attractions such as Gardens by The Bay, Madame Tussauds and the River Safari.

STRENGTH IN NUMBERS

Nurses spend hours of their own time leading support groups to encourage and comfort patients.

I get to meet others like me; we support and encourage each other.

Lim Teck Meng
Amputee Support Group Member

I get to meet others like me; we support and encourage each other.

Lim Teck Meng first joined the group in 2014. The 47-year-old, who lost his lower limb in 2014, is a regular at the group’s outings.

“Some amputees don’t leave the house for months because it is not easy to get around. When they do venture out, they sometimes face insensitive comments from the public. That is why support group outings are so important,” shared Tow Choo.

Interacting with fellow amputees helps members develop a positive outlook about their condition. “We had a patient who recently had a prosthesis fitted and she wasn’t feeling confident. But when she saw other patients walking normally with their prosthetic limbs, she started walking more confidently. She went back to work shortly after that,” Raudhah recounted.
Lean on Me

Three-year-old Miranda is an active and playful child. An observer would not be able to tell that this bubbly toddler suffers from epilepsy.

“She used to have fits six to seven times a day,” her mother Bei Bei recalled. “The episodes would come without warning – when she was having a meal, or even when she was sleeping. We felt very helpless and devastated.”

The Paediatric Epilepsy Support Group in KK Women’s and Children’s Hospital (KKH) helps to support parents of children with epilepsy. The group was initiated in 2014 by Nurse Clinician Martha Kao and Senior Staff Nurse Hoh Sing Yee. They also enlisted the help of neurologists, pharmacists, medical social workers, psychologists, sports medicine specialists, volunteers and medical students.

Martha shared, “The critical period for parents is when the disease is first diagnosed. Doubts and uncertainties about the child’s future worry them. We have seen cases where parents or grandparents decided to take things into their own hands and adjust or stop the medication without consulting the doctor. This can be disastrous for the child.”

There are currently more than 100 parents, caregivers and patients in the support group. With the patients’ ages ranging from a few months to over 20 years old, the group organises a wide range of events, from a Sports Day for children, to educational talks on topics such as myths about epilepsy and the different stages of childhood epilepsy. These sessions also give parents and caregivers the opportunity to interact.

“The talks help the parents make informed choices for their children. It’s also a time for them to share their problems and concerns,” added Sing Yee.

For Bei Bei, the support group is a source of reassurance. “When parents see how others cope with the situation or have overcome the same challenges, it makes them feel less alone and more confident that their children will grow up to lead normal lives.”

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Bei Bei
Epilepsy Support Group Member

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Martha Kao
Nurse Clinician
Four nurses tell us what drives them to perform volunteer work.

My first overseas volunteering assignment was in Phnom Penh, Cambodia in 2016. Since then, I have been on six mission trips to places such as Okpho, Myanmar and several regions in Cambodia.

Cataracts are easily treatable with surgery in Singapore, but in these rural areas, we saw patients who have completely lost their vision. As most of them are low-income farmers, the loss of vision affects their livelihoods.

During each trip, we have 60 to 70 operations scheduled each day. My role is to screen patients for pre-op preparations, assist during surgery and care for them post-op. The days are long and hectic during these volunteer assignments, but knowing that I have played a part to make lives better, motivates me to go on more trips.

Stepping Outside My Comfort Zone

Esther Ng
Senior Staff Nurse
National Dental Centre Singapore

“Life begins at the end of your comfort zone.” These were the guiding words when I embarked on my first medical mission to Taunggyi, Myanmar with Smile Asia. My first taste of volunteer work as an Operating Theatre nurse went smoothly as the team of medical professionals was very experienced. We successfully performed cleft lip and palate operations on 61 patients over four days.

I used to have a fear of flying, and would never have imagined going to Myanmar to perform volunteer work. Through this rewarding experience, I have become more confident about doing things outside my comfort zone.

The Gift of Sight

Goh Hui Jin
Senior Staff Nurse
Singapore National Eye Centre

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Four nurses tell us what drives them to perform volunteer work.

While on a weekend getaway in Batam in 2014, my friends and I decided to do something more meaningful. We visited an orphanage and what we saw broke our hearts. The facilities were sparse and the children were surviving on donated rations. Since then, we have returned to Batam every three months, visiting up to two orphanages each time with daily essentials such as rice, diapers, books and stationery. Our most ambitious project was when we raised funds to build a second storey for an orphanage to create a study room, more bedrooms and space for the children to gather and play. Through generous donations from our network of friends, we managed to raise $20,000 in just two months. It was priceless to see the excitement on the children's faces as they enjoyed their new space.

Caring for Orphans

Roslina Bte Rahim
Senior Enrolled Nurse
National Neuroscience Institute

I started providing voluntary wound care service after a friend asked me to look at her relative’s wound because it was not healing. It has been about two years since I started, the patients I see are mostly referred to me by my friends or colleagues. I visit them after work on weekdays or weekends to help them with their wound dressing, pressure injuries and stoma care. Most of them are unsure or afraid to clean their wounds, so I take the opportunity to guide them and their caregivers on the steps.

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Healing their Wounds

Liew Lee Foong
Nursing Officer
Bright Vision Hospital

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Besides nursing care, I also lend them a listening ear and give them emotional support, especially for those who live alone. I’m very grateful to be able to put my nursing skills to good use and help those in need.
The nursing profession has progressed by leaps and bounds over the years but some myths never seem to go away. Here are five common myths and the truths behind them.

**MYTH #1**

Anyone can be a nurse – the work is dull and repetitive.

**FACT**

Every day presents a different challenge. To be a nurse, one has to be detail-oriented, a great communicator, an outstanding problem-solver, and most importantly, have the ability to demonstrate compassion and empathy for patients.

**MYTH #2**

It’s a job for ladies.

**FACT**

SingHealth employs more than 800 male nurses. The expanding roles and different career tracks are attracting more men to the profession.
MYTH #3
All nurses do the same thing.

FACT
Nurses at SingHealth have more than 30 different specialties to choose from including emergency medicine, oncology and cardiac care. Besides clinical care, they can pursue career tracks such as management, education, research and nursing informatics. Beyond hospital walls, nurses help residents to keep well, get well and age well in the community.

MYTH #4
Nurses are doctors’ assistants.

FACT
Nurses are highly-trained professionals in their own right and have skills and knowledge in different specialities. They take on a wide range of patient care responsibilities and some nurses run clinics and can prescribe medication!

MYTH #5
Nursing is a job with no career progression.

FACT
Nurses are in high demand in different care settings including general hospitals, national speciality centres, community hospitals and polyclinics. They have a clear career path that supports their passion to serve and have training opportunities for higher education. At SingHealth, nurses pursue continual learning and 50% of them hold a bachelor’s degree or higher qualification.
Join us! Be a SingHealth Nurse

At SingHealth, we are committed to nurturing generations of Nurses. Whether you are a student or a mid-career switcher, there are various schemes to equip you with the essential skills for a career in Nursing.

**Scholarships**
Healthcare scholarships are awarded by MOH Holdings on behalf of the public healthcare sector. Recipients can choose to serve their bond at SingHealth.

**Sponsorships**
Our institutions offer sponsorships so that students can get a head start in their healthcare career. Monthly sponsorship allowances are given to eligible individuals.

**Professional Conversion Programmes (PCP)**
It’s never too late to embark on a rewarding journey in Nursing. The PCP enables mid-career Singaporeans to undergo training to become Registered Nurses or Enrolled Nurses.

**Return to Nursing (RTN)**
SingHealth offers the RTN Programme to help nurses who have left service for 5 years or more, to return to nursing practice.

FIND OUT MORE AT