

Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine offers a different model of education: Heng



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SINGAPORE - "Our healthcare system must remain responsive, and our healthcare professionals must be prepared to continually develop new capabilities to meet rising public expectations, and increasing demand for more specialised services," said Mr Heng who was speaking at the official opening of the annex building of Nanyang Technological University's medical school.

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Here is the full speech by Education Minister Heng Swee Keat:

It is my pleasure to be here today at the official opening of the Annex building of Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine (LKCMedicine) Novena Campus, and to mark the naming of the Toh Kian Chui Annex.

Diversity of Medical Education

LKCMedicine is Singapore's second medical school for undergraduate training. It is a strategic collaboration between the Nanyang Technological University (NTU) and Imperial College London. Many of you have worked hard to make this a reality, from the time the establishment of the second undergraduate medical school was announced in 2010, all the way up to the matriculation of its first batch of 54 undergraduate medical students in Aug 2013.

I would like to congratulate all the stakeholders of LKCMedicine - NTU, Imperial College, the Ministry of Health, and the National Healthcare Group - for this achievement, and to thank all donors for their contributions.

The launch of LKCMedicine was also a milestone in our medical education landscape. Besides training more doctors, LKCMedicine provides a model of medical education that differs from what is currently offered at our other medical schools, NUS's Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine and the Duke-NUS Graduate Medical School.

This diversity allows Singapore to draw on the strengths of various approaches to medical education, and benefit from the best of different pedagogies. This is especially important as Singapore's healthcare demands evolve.

Our healthcare system must remain responsive, and our healthcare professionals must be prepared to continually develop new capabilities to meet rising public expectations, and increasing demand for more specialised services.

LKCMedicine will offer new avenues for students to collaborate and innovate. I am happy to note that LKCMedicine's curriculum will also incorporate key elements necessary to cater to our changing healthcare landscape, by drawing on Imperial College's strength in medical training as well as NTU's focus on interdisciplinary learning and research.

For example, the School's interdisciplinary approach is designed to expose students to a variety of subjects, giving them a broad-based education centred on medicine.

LKCMedicine's students will also have clinical learning opportunities and exposure to the full range of healthcare delivery environments in Singapore, ensuring that they will be able to deliver excellent care in a variety of clinical settings.

The use of Team-Based Learning and e-Learning at LKCMedicine will encourage self-directed learning and train students to be adept at tapping and harnessing the latest technological advances to provide better care for patients. This will also equip and motivate LKCMedicine's students to continue learning and improving throughout their careers.

Besides equipping students with a firm foundation in basic medical sciences, students will be trained in essential soft skills like interpersonal communication, leadership, as well as shared decision-making through the wide-use of simulations.

These essential skills will better prepare students for real clinical situations and cultivate a cadre of well-rounded and nurturing doctors. I had the pleasure of speaking to several of these students earlier before coming to the auditorium, and they were excited about the way they were receiving their medical education and the way that they are learning.

Education and the community

While LKCMedicine is well placed to train competent and skilful doctors, technical competency and skills are not enough. A values-centred education is particularly important, especially in medical education, as all doctors will need to have within them the compassion, empathy and integrity to deal with each and every patient. They will also be faced with many difficult situations where they have to exercise judgment.

A good role model is Mr Toh Kian Chui, who was one of our pioneering entrepreneurs. As Chairman of the Governing Board mentioned earlier, Mr Toh might have been a doctor himself. He would have used his talents to help other people, had he had the opportunity to pursue a formal medical education. Nevertheless, Mr Toh demonstrated diligence, resilience and determination in his long-standing and successful career as a businessman, and built up a prosperous road construction company, which built Changi Airport's first runway as well as the facilities in Kusu Island.

The Chinese saying aptly depicts Mr Toh's life story. Besides being a well-respected businessman, Mr Toh was also a compassionate man, who believed strongly in giving back to the community and helping the less fortunate. To this end, Mr Toh contributed generously - and often anonymously - to many charities in Singapore.

Today, the Toh Kian Chui Foundation continues his legacy by actively supporting education initiatives in Singapore, and the government is pleased to be able to match this very generous spirit.

In the same way, we hope that LKCMedicine will be able to embody the same pioneering spirit demonstrated by Mr Toh and lead in providing an alternative model of undergraduate medical education in Singapore, spearheading innovation in educating and nurturing doctors with deep values. Medical students can also emulate Mr Toh's spirit of diligence and compassion.

I would like to express my appreciation to the Toh Kian Chui Foundation for your generous donation to LKCMedicine. The LKCMedicine's Annex will be named the Toh Kian Chui Annex in his honour, and I hope that this

Annex will serve as a reminder of the achievements of one of our pioneering business leaders and his generosity, and will serve as inspiration for all our medical students who pass through these portals.

In closing, I would like to extend my congratulations to both NTU and Imperial College on achieving this important milestone for LKCMedicine. Thank you.

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