

Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine, Singapore's third medical school, officially opens



Deputy Prime Minister Teo Chee Hean closing the time capsule, signifying the launch of the Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine. ST PHOTO: JAMIE KOH

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SINGAPORE - The youngest of Singapore's three medical schools officially opened its doors on Monday morning (Aug 28) after four years in operation.

The Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine took in its first batch of 54 students in 2013. They will be graduating in the middle of next year.

Deputy Prime Minister Teo Chee Hean, who spoke at the opening ceremony, said that technology will transform the future of medicine and medical professionals must embrace the latest innovations.

This is especially since diseases evolve quickly and can be transmitted across borders in our connected world.

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"We must improve cross-border coordination to combat such threats more effectively," said Mr Teo, who is also Coordinating Minister for National Security.

"Big data and smart systems can help to sense and model the spread of diseases and contact tracing."

Mr Teo also spoke on how the new school is helping to develop doctors with "heart" by pairing medical students with patients who have long-term, non-acute needs.

"This helps to provide additional support for these patients, and encourages our budding doctors to have a deep understanding of the complex interactions between treatment of disease and total patient health and well-being."

The new medical school is a collaboration between the Nanyang Technological University (NTU) and Imperial College London. Its curriculum is based closely on Imperial's curriculum, but with adaptations to suit Singapore's needs.

Students at both institutions undertake overseas exchange programmes.

"Singaporean students were especially interested in the British approach to anatomy dissection," said Professor Alice Gast, who is president of Imperial.

"And, Imperial students enjoyed experiencing Lee Kong Chian's team-based learning."

The medical school has two buildings - the Experimental Medicine Building at the main NTU campus in Jurong West, and the Clinical Sciences Building in Novena, where Monday's ceremony was held.

"The trademark of any successful joint programme is that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts," said Professor Bertil Andersson, who is president of NTU.

"And today...we have a unique medical school we couldn't have created on our own, and of that we can truly be proud."