Singapore's new medical school breaks ground

By Vmita Mohandas | Posted: 28 May 2012 1654 hrs

SINGAPORE: Singapore's third medical school, the Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine, will help to create more opportunities for Singaporeans to pursue a local medical education at home.

The joint medical school by Imperial College London and Nanyang Technological University (NTU), is due to start classes in August 2013 and will eventually have 150 students a year.

The school held its ground-breaking ceremony on Monday.

By 2030, one in five Singaporeans will be above the age of 65.

To meet rising healthcare demands, the new Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine will play a key role in growing the pool of doctors in Singapore.

The school will have one campus at NTU and another at Mandalay Road near Tan Tock Seng Hospital.

Its campus at Mandalay Road sits on the site where a hostel for medical students was built in 1924 but is currently being restored for use as the school’s headquarters. It will be equipped with training and administration facilities and will be ready by June 2013, just in time to welcome the first intake of 50 students in August 2013.

This campus will also include a Clinical Sciences Building, which is in close proximity to Tan Tock Seng Hospital to facilitate students' integration into clinical settings.

The campus at NTU's Yunnan Garden, called the Experimental Medicine Building, will be situated in the biomedical-engineering cluster and will have a link to the School of Biological Sciences to facilitate partnerships between researchers and students of both schools.

The Experimental Medicine Building will be completed in 2015. It's also aimed at combining knowledge and application across different disciplines that will help to introduce breakthrough medicine.

Minister for Education Heng Swee Keat said: “These interfaces are critical, because the challenges of medicine today are growing. Changing disease profiles, the barrage of new medical knowledge, technological advances and the speed at which information technology is changing have all affected the way healthcare institutions function.”

And with a fast ageing population, it's key that doctors in Singapore are groomed to navigate an integrated healthcare system to provide patients with seamless care across various healthcare settings - whether it's in polyclinics, acute hospitals or long term facilities.

Minister for Health Gan Kim Yong said: "The Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine medical students will have the opportunity to follow an elderly patient or a patient with a chronic condition over a period of two years to learn about how these patients live day-to-day and how they are cared for within the healthcare system.

"This will develop the students' empathy towards their patients and train them to think about the care of patients not only from a systems viewpoint but also from a patient's viewpoint."

The curriculum will be delivered using a wide range of methods such as e-learning modules and apprenticeships.

It will also include seminars, problem-based and team-based learning as well as lectures.

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