New school to open path for more S’poreans in healthcare: Heng

More Singaporeans will likely join the healthcare sector once a planned new school of medicine opens, said Minister of Education Heng Swee Keat on Monday.

Speaking at the ground-breaking of the Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine in Nanyang Technology University’s (NTU’s) Novena campus, Heng pointed out the new school would “create more opportunities for Singaporeans locally” and that “more Singaporeans will choose to study medicine in Singapore and contribute to Singapore’s healthcare sector thereafter”.

Also at the event, Minister of Health Gan Kim Yong said that the new school would play a “pivotal role” in adding to Singapore’s capacity to train and develop doctors to meet Singapore’s healthcare needs in 2020 and beyond.

Singapore faces a rapidly greying population and a shortage in healthcare professionals.

The school, a joint effort between NTU and Imperial College London, will be built on the site where a hostel for medical students was built in 1924. The building has been identified for conservation and is currently being restored for use as the school’s headquarters.

In a joint statement, NTU and ICL said that the while the main aim of the school is “to produce doctors for Singapore”, it will also advance medical research.

The Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine will be ready by June 2013, in time for its first intake of 50 undergraduates for its five-year undergraduate medical degree programme in August 2013. A new high-rise Clinical Sciences Building is also expected to be ready in 2015.

Other plans for a dual campus were also revealed. A new Experimental Medicine Building at NTU’s Yunnan Garden Campus is expected to be completed in 2015. This building will be the bridge between several disciplines including engineering, sciences, business and medicine.