More doctors being trained to meet future healthcare needs

More doctors are being trained to meet future healthcare needs.

SINGAPORE: As the Health Ministry ramps up infrastructural capacity to meet future healthcare needs, more doctors are also being trained.

With the opening of the Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine, medical intakes have grown by 34 per cent over the past five years, said Health Minister Gan Kim Yong on Thursday.

Mr Gan was speaking at the Nanyang Technological University's first White Coat Ceremony for the inaugural batch of 54 medical students at the Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine.

The annual White Coat Ceremony is a tradition at many schools of medicine and typically marks the beginning of a student's clinical education.

For 19-year-old Ryan Chen, receiving his white coat and stethoscope signals the first step towards a profession for life that he has wanted.

"Medicine is one of the few careers where I can combine my love for biology and science with my love for serving society because I have had much community work experience," he said.

Ryan is the first inductee into the newest medical school in Singapore, along with 53 of his peers.

The students have already had their first lesson.

Aswarya Narayanan, a student at the Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine, said: "We had it in a form of a team-based learning session. It basically allows you to interact in your team and argue out your rationale for deciding on answers. It gives you a very intellectually stimulating experience on the whole topic. Instead of listening to lectures, you are the one arguing out your opinions."

As the demand for healthcare services is expected to rise with chronic diseases becoming more prevalent, Mr Gan said a different approach to care is needed.

"Our doctors cannot hope to treat and cure chronic conditions with a simple prescription or surgery. They need to play a greater role in promoting healthy living and facilitating the early detection of lifestyle risks that could lead to chronic diseases," said Mr Gan.

Mr Gan added he was encouraged that part of Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine's curriculum requires students to be attached to patients with chronic diseases for two years.

It is this patient-centric approach that the school hopes to teach its students by assessing them in areas of compassion and kindness.

Professor Jenny Higham, senior vice-dean at Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine, said: "Throughout the entirety of the medical programme, we've constantly emphasised this compassionate and kind element. And what we're going to do is reinforce that with assessments that look for areas of competence and kindness."

The students will be the first to benefit from the School's innovative technology, such as the Anatomage Table for virtual dissection and the use of plastinated human specimens for anatomy learning.

The first cohort of 54 students was selected from more than 800 applicants.

They will graduate from the five-year programme with a Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery (MBBS) degree. - CNA