

MEDIA RELEASE
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FIRST IN COMMUNITY CARE: REN CI HOSPITAL UPSKILL NURSES TO PERFORM TRACHEOSTOMY CHANGE AND CARE

1. Ren Ci Hospital has embarked on a 5-year strategy to upskill its nurses to equip them to meet the changing demands of taking care of an ageing population. This includes training them to perform tracheostomy change and care. The hospital is the first community care provider in Singapore to do this.
2. Nurses form the largest group of healthcare professionals and are found in all care settings. They are pivotal in delivering care, building relationships with patients, and ensuring effective care coordination and case management for patients.
3. As Singapore's population is aging rapidly, Ren Ci sees more referrals of older frail patients suffering from more chronic diseases and complex conditions necessitating higher levels and capabilities of nursing care.
4. The scope of nursing duties now extends well beyond basic hygiene care. Nurses are now anchoring care for patients, formulating individualised care plans and providing bedside clinical care, such as wound care, dementia care and palliative care. They also partner doctors and have taken over many higher-level skills-based tasks, such as venepuncture to draw blood samples and intravenous cannulation for administration of drips and drugs.
5. Recognising these changing demands and seeing more frail patients being referred, Ren Ci is training its nurses to continue to stay ahead in their skillsets so that they can better care for its patients/residents, under an initiative called "Re-inventing Nursing 2.0 @ Ren Ci".

Training Nurses to Perform Tracheostomy Change and Care

6. One of the key skills is in tracheostomy change and care. A tracheostomy is an opening created from the outside of the neck to a person's windpipe. A tracheostomy tube is placed through the opening to help the person breathe. This tube needs to be changed every 3 months and the change is typically performed by doctors.
7. In a first for a community care provider in Singapore, Ren Ci is training its nurses to take on this role. Since June 2023, it has been working with Tan Tock Seng Hospital's specialist doctors to train and equip a group of seven Registered Nurses (RNs) to perform routine tracheostomy tube change independently. We aim to train 28 nurses over 4 years starting from 2024 to 2027.

8. Ren Ci's trained nurses can now independently perform routine tracheostomy tube changes. This reduces the need for patients to wait for scheduled change by doctors and increases patient comfort as the change is done by familiar staff in a familiar environment.

Benefits to Ren Ci Hospital's Patients

9. Ren Ci Hospital runs the only Chronic Sick Unit (High) in Singapore. It has more than 50 residents who are breathing through tracheostomy. These patients have high nursing care needs such as high frequency of suctioning for respiratory secretions and complex wound care. Several patients also cannot breathe on their own and require the support of a mechanical ventilator, connected to their tracheostomy. In addition to the CSU, more patients referred to Nursing Homes are also on tracheostomy.

10. Previously, long term care patients with tracheostomy would be sent to specialist outpatient clinic (SOC) every 3 months for tracheostomy tube change. This involved arranging transport for patient, with care staff and next of kin having to accompany the patient. To make it easier for patients, in-house tracheostomy tube change was introduced, eliminating the need for the patient to travel to SOC. Now, with nurses leading the change, there are even greater cost savings.

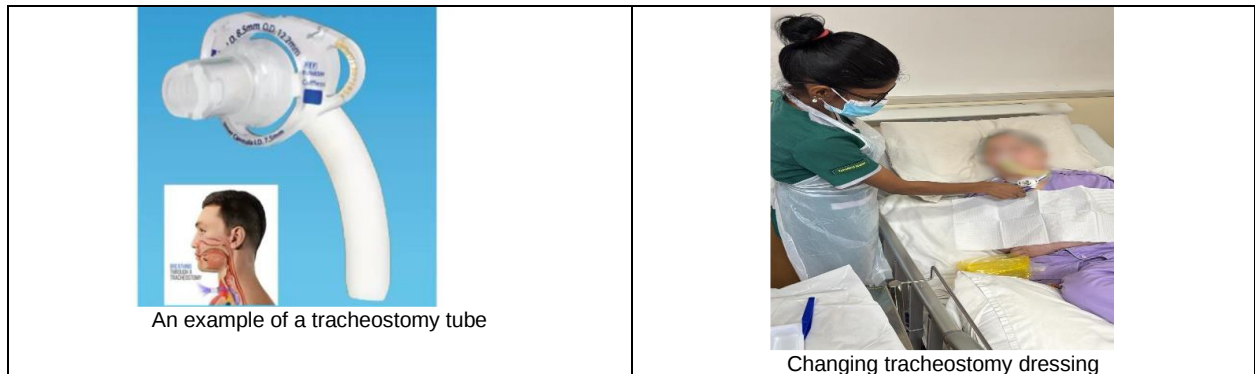
11. Since the implementation of nurse-led tracheostomy tube change in Mar 2024, over a period of 7 months until Oct 24, 62 changes of tracheostomy tube has been performed by our nurses, benefiting 46 of our CSU patients, which is more than 90% of our patients on tracheostomy. Compared to previous model of needing to go to SOC for tracheostomy change, this saves almost \$50,000 per year and 215 man hours.

12. This is only the first step for Ren Ci Hospital. Under its "Re-inventing Nursing 2.0 @ Ren Ci", it will train its nurses in other areas over the next five years, including:

- Subacute Clinical capabilities, to support subacute care for patients with higher care needs
- General palliative care, to provide competencies in assessing the needs of patients, the use of specialized injectable drugs and infusions, conduct Advance Care Planning (ACP) discussions, as well as grief and bereavement support for next-of-kin.
- Developing Nursing Specialty Care teams, to provide expertise and just-in-time training and consultancy for other nurses in its facilities

Ren Ci Hospital will continue to look for ways to upskill its staff, so as to better serve its beneficiaries and fulfil its vision of holistic care with loving kindness and compassion.

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About Ren Ci Hospital

Established since 1994, Ren Ci Hospital is one of the few charity healthcare institutions in Singapore to provide high quality and affordable medical, nursing and rehabilitative care services for the community, based on the principles of loving kindness and compassion. Ren Ci plays an integral role in supporting the healthcare needs of the elderly through adopting a holistic way of delivering person-centred care.

Today Ren Ci Hospital runs a community hospital, a chronic sick unit, three nursing homes, four Senior Care Centres and one Active Ageing Centre (Care). These facilities are spread throughout Singapore, at Ang Mo Kio, Bukit Batok, Novena and Woodlands.

Besides giving hope to the frail elderly by helping overcome their disabilities and teaching their families to care for them at home, Ren Ci also partners various community groups and social enterprises to give dignity back to the elderly.