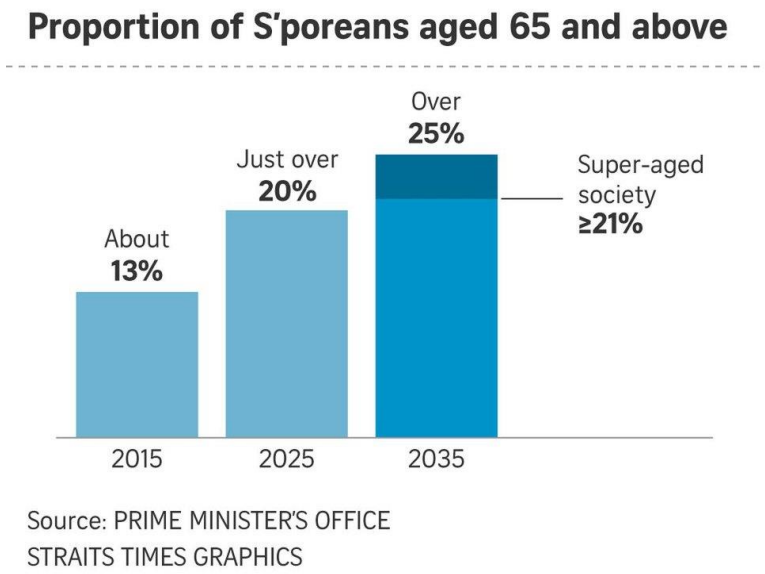
COMMUNITY HOSPITALS IN SINGAPORE

A/Prof Tan Boon Yeow | 8th October 2025

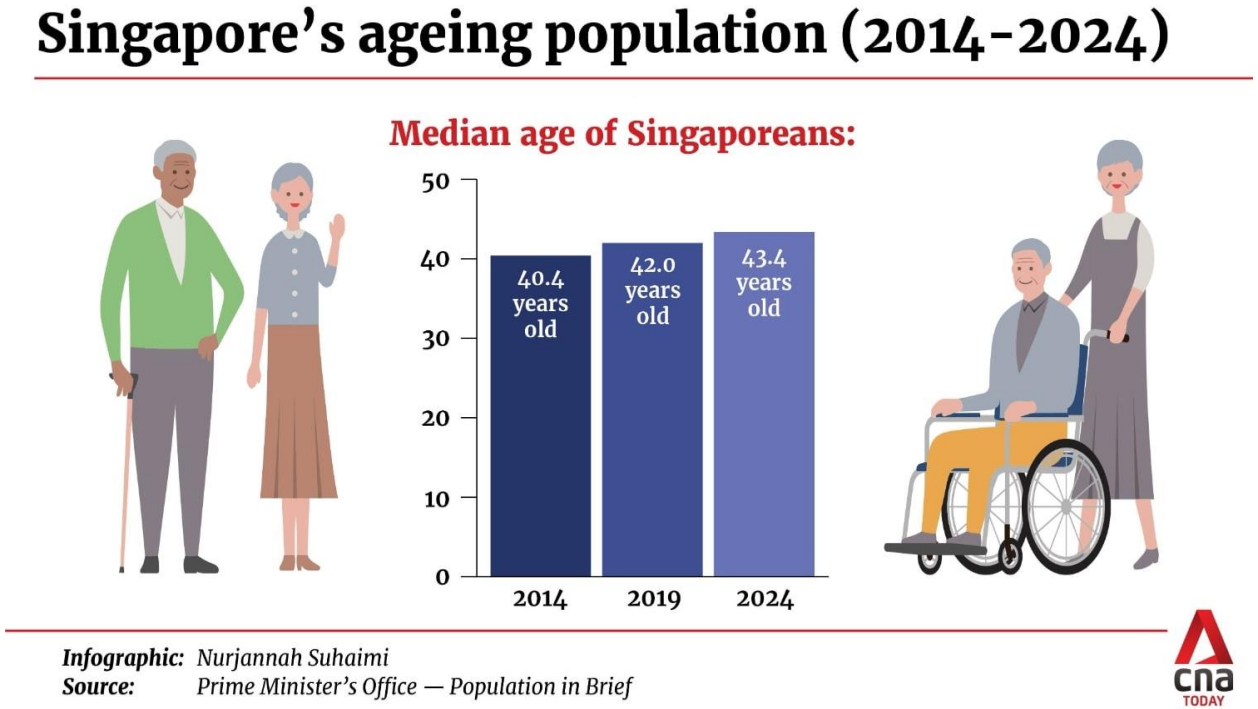
Singapore's Population



Singapore will reach

Super-Aged status by 2026

where ≥ 21% of population crosses the age of 65.



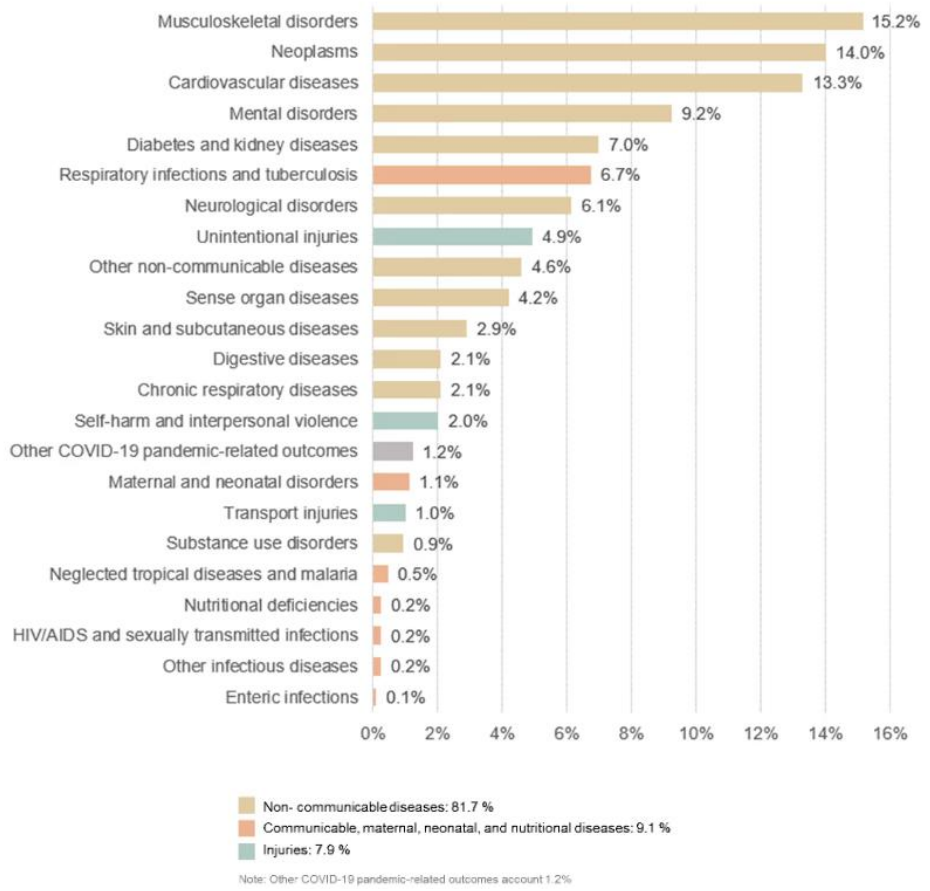
Dependency ratio is rising – there are fewer working adults per elderly person, due to a rapidly ageing population coupled with low fertility rates.

Source: The Straits Times/CNA

Singapore's Population

St Luke's HOSPITAL

Distribution of Disability-Adjusted Life Years (DALYs) (%) in Singapore by Broad-Cause Disease Group, 2021



Narrow the gap between

Lifespan
~84 years

VS

Healthspan
~74 years

Singaporeans are **living longer, but not healthier**, with the average Singaporean suffering 10 years of illness or disability before end of life.

Source: Ministry of Health, Disease Burden 2023/Ministry of Health, 12th October 2023 Speech by Health Minister Ong Ye Kung

How should the role of Community Hospitals transform to support Singapore's future population

PUBLISHED 29 MAY 2021, 6:51 PM SGT

SINGAPORE - The exponential rise in national healthcare spending cannot be allowed to cripple Singapore's future, said Health Minister Ong Ye Kung as he laid out the steps being taken to rein in costs without compromising the quality of care.

Key to this is moving healthcare upstream by letting general practitioners (GPs), polyclinics and community hospitals play larger roles, allowing "heavily loaded" hospitals to focus on patients who need specialist care or emergency cases.

"Our current national healthcare expenditure has almost doubled from $10 billion in 2010 to $21 billion in 2018. It will almost triple to $59 billion in 2030. This exponential rise is worrying," Mr Ong told more than 700 healthcare workers during his ministry's annual work plan seminar, which was delivered virtually on Tuesday (May 25).

Source: The Straits Times

Journey of CHs in Singapore

The Beginning

1983

Original intent

CHs to be managed by Family Physicians.
Direct admission of patients from the community who did not need highly specialised care.

1990s

St Andrew's Community Hospital (1992)

Post-acute rehabilitation facility

Ang Mo Kio Hospital (1993)

Inpatient facility to support GPs with direct admission rights

Ren Ci Hospital (1994)

Operated as Chronic Sick Unit, officially launched as CH in 2010

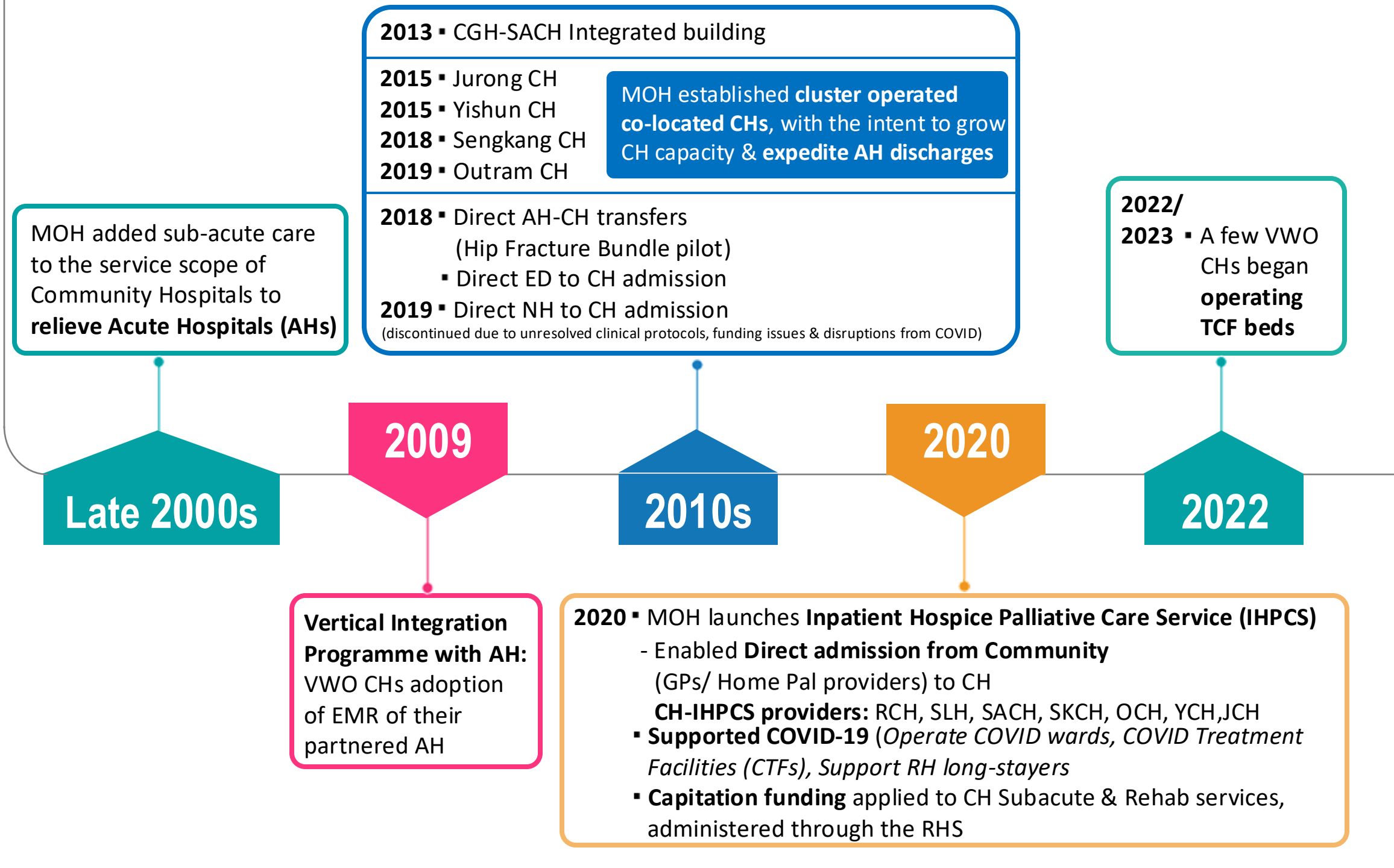
St Luke's Hospital (1996)

Model slowly gravitated to **primary role of CHs as rehabilitation facility**

2000s

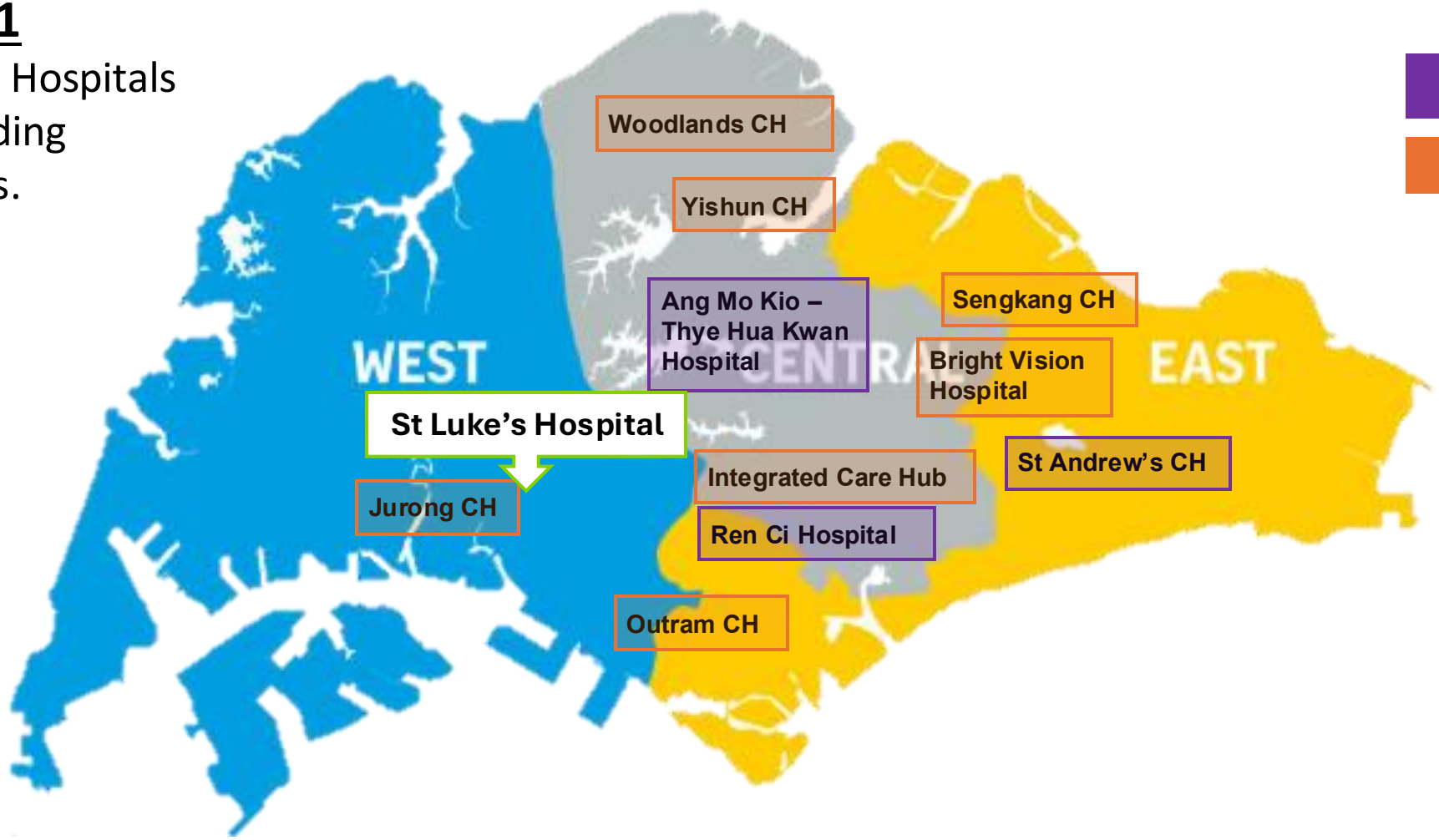
Bright Vision Hospital (2001)

1st established & managed by Singapore Buddhist Welfare Services.
Management was moved to SingHealth Services in 2011.


Late 2000s
MOH added sub-acute care to the service scope of Community Hospitals to **relieve Acute Hospitals (AHs)**
2009
Vertical Integration Programme with AH: VWO CHs adoption of EMR of their partnered AH
2010s
2013 ▪ CGH-SACH Integrated building
2015 ▪ Jurong CH
2015 ▪ Yishun CH
2018 ▪ Sengkang CH
2019 ▪ Outram CH
MOH established **cluster operated co-located CHs**, with the intent to grow CH capacity & **expedite AH discharges**
2018 ▪ Direct AH-CH transfers (Hip Fracture Bundle pilot)
▪ Direct ED to CH admission
2019 ▪ Direct NH to CH admission
(discontinued due to unresolved clinical protocols, funding issues & disruptions from COVID)
2020
2020 ▪ MOH launches **Inpatient Hospice Palliative Care Service (IHPCS)**
- Enabled **Direct admission from Community** (GPs/ Home Pal providers) to CH
CH-IHPCS providers: RCH, SLH, SACH, SKCH, OCH, YCH,JCH
▪ **Supported COVID-19** (*Operate COVID wards, COVID Treatment Facilities (CTFs), Support RH long-stayers*
▪ **Capitation funding** applied to CH Subacute & Rehab services, administered through the RHS
2022
2022/ 2023 ▪ A few VWO CHs began **operating TCF beds**

Community Hospitals in Singapore

Currently **11** Community Hospitals (CHs) providing ~3,497 beds.



4 Charity CHs (~1,163 beds)

7 Public-owned CHs (~2,331 beds)

Role of CHs in Singapore

CHs primarily provides:

Inpatient Care

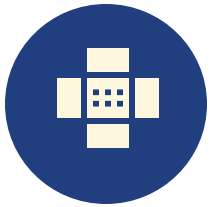
=

Rehabilitation Care

Sub-acute Care

+/-

Some CHs developed new capabilities and Centers of Excellences



Wound Care

Dementia Care

Palliative Care

caring for patients **with <u>sub-acute, geriatric syndromes and palliative needs</u>**.

- CH Inpatient Care serve as a **bridge between acute care and community**. Most CHs also provide community care services such as **Day Rehab** and **Home Care**. Some have also established **primary care, renal support** (dialysis for high dependency patients) and **nursing homes**.
- Some CHs are also forerunners in supporting the community sector through **clinical reinforcement**, **training** and **social prescribing**
- During the pandemic, CHs played a significant role in the care of a wide range of stable COVID-19 patients, including the running of Covid-19 Treatment Facilities (CTF).

Over the years, Community Hospitals had built capabilities to meet growing needs in the healthcare landscape

Acute Hospital

Upstream support to AHs in reducing Length Of Stay (LoS) / Bed Crunch

Community Hospital

Downstream support to community in providing services, support and capability building

Community Care

- Rehabilitation
- Sub-acute Care
- Sub-acute Care
- Inpatient Hospice Palliative Care

Primary Care	Built Primary care capabilities and support partners in managing complex patients to stay well in Community
Nursing Homes	Provided clinical services to Nursing Homes to support seniors and reduce Hospitalisations
Centre of Excellences	Built capabilities in wound, palliative & End of Life care, Community Nursing and Renal Support
Social-prescribing	Forerunners in training the sector on social prescribing

Our Beginnings

ST LUKE'S HOSPITAL
FOR THE ELDERLY

A Kairos Moment

1ST Hospital in Singapore for THE ELDERLY SICK

BORN IN OCTOBER **1996** OUT OF A **NEED**

$5000
Seed fund
▼
$13M

8 FOUNDATION MEMBERS

- Bartley Christian Church
- bfec Bethesda Frankel Estate Church
- Bethesda Katong Church
- Church of Singapore 新加坡教会
- Graduates' Christian Fellowship
- Presbyterian Community Services
- Singapore Nurses' Christian Fellowship 新加坡基督教护士团契
- Wesley Methodist Church

Meeting Needs

1996	COMMUNITY HOSPITAL
1999	ST LUKE'S ELDERCARE
2005	OUTPATIENT SERVICES
2007	DEMENTIA WARD
2013	EXPANSION OF 48 BEDS
2016	ST LUKE'S COMMUNITY WOUND CENTRE
2017	PALLIATIVE CARE WARD
2018	ST LUKE'S COMMUNITY HUB
2019	ST LUKE'S ACADEMY

2019 & Beyond

Service enhancements to meet new needs

PREVENTIVE CARE	Healthier SG
AGED CARE	Ageing in Place with Active Ageing Centre (AAC)
	Palliative Care & End-of-Life services

Our Distinctiveness: Holistic, Integrated & Specialised care

Comprehensive & Integrated Care & Services

Wellness

CLINICAL

SOCIAL

PASTORAL

Wholeness

INPATIENT

OUTPATIENT

Centre-based
Home-Based

COMMUNITY

Peaks of Excellence

Wound

Rehabilitation

Care for persons

with complex needs

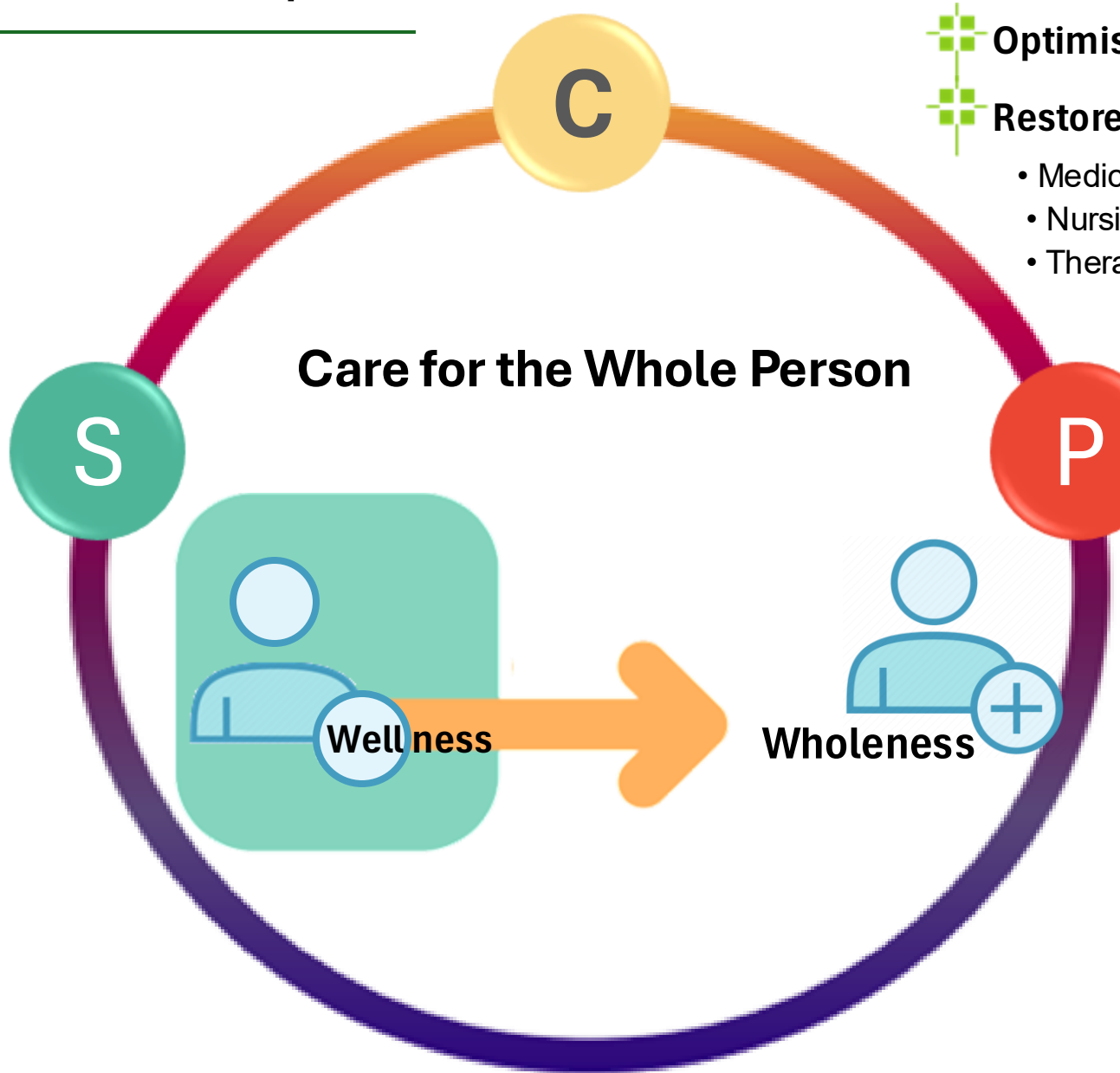
Dementia

Palliative

Our Distinctiveness: Holistic Person-Centric care

How we do it @ St Luke's Hospital

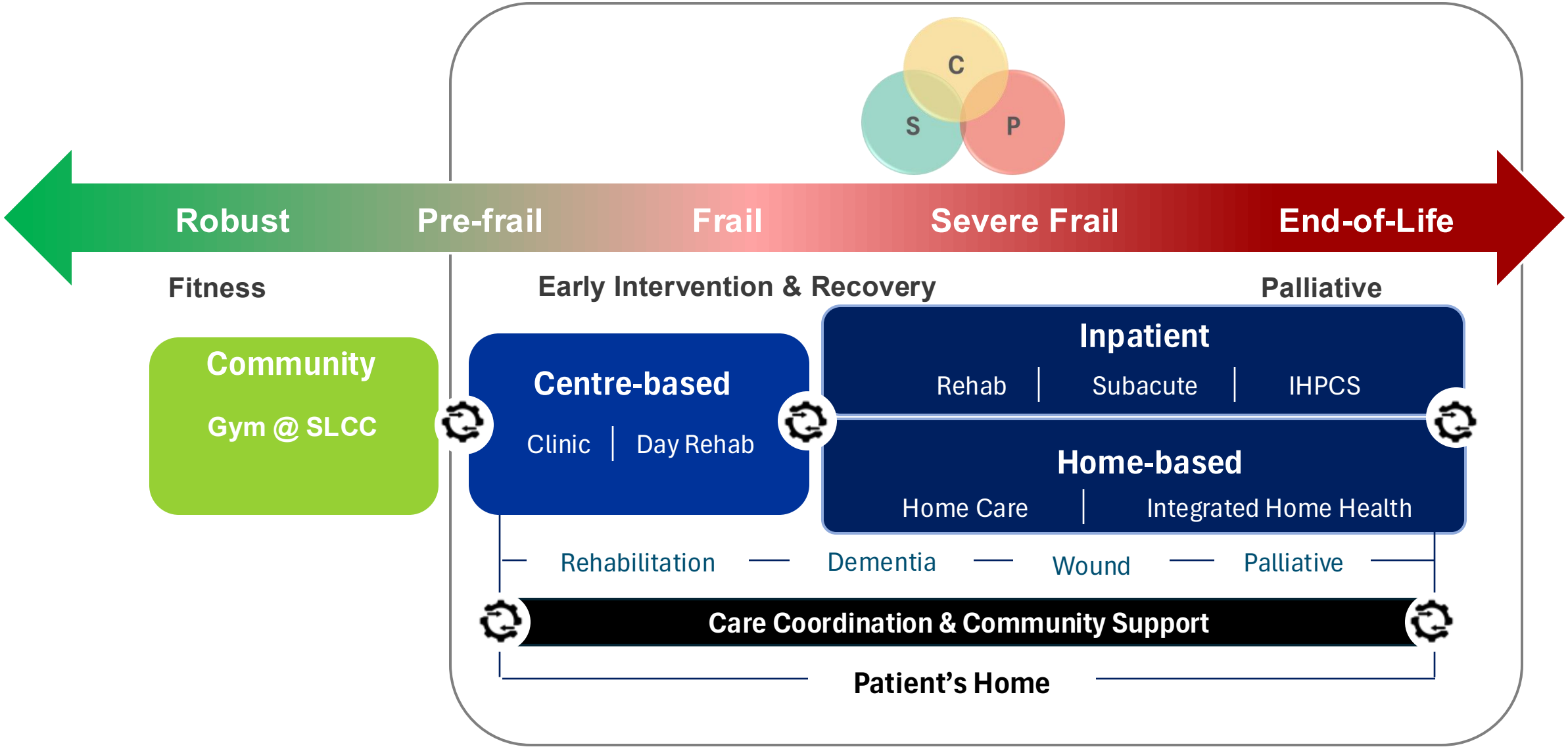
- **Community Integration**
- **Empowerment & enhancing self efficacy**
- **Mitigate negative social determinants of health**



- **Optimise medical conditions**
- **Restore and enhance functional abilities**
  - Medical Care
  - Nursing care
  - Therapy Interventions

- **Facilitate restoration of self worth, purpose & identity**
- **Build confidence & resilience**
- **Provide socio-emotional & pastoral support**

Our Distinctiveness:
Comprehensive & Integrated care Ecosystem



Meeting Needs Across the Care Spectrum

St Luke's Hospital

Robust | Pre-frail | Frail | Severe Frail | End-of-Life

Preventive Care

Active Ageing

Curative Care

Early Intervention & Recovery

Palliative Care

Ending Well

For majority of our patients, we aspire to ***cure & restore*** them; where possible, enhance their health through ***fitness***

Beyond the curative stage, we adopt the ***palliative care approach*** to ensure comfort for patients and their loved ones, journeying with them through the end of life.

Family Medicine Clinic

- Care & Counselling
- Community Mental Wellness
- Dementia
- Diabetes
- Dietetic
- X-Ray

St Luke's Community Clinic

Specialty Clinics

- Wound
- Eye
- Dental

Reinforce GPs & Primary Care Networks

SLH Western Silvercare (WOW programme)

Community Gym

GYM UP

Physically independent

Gym Tonic
Restore, maintain or improve strength for everyday tasks.

Physically fit

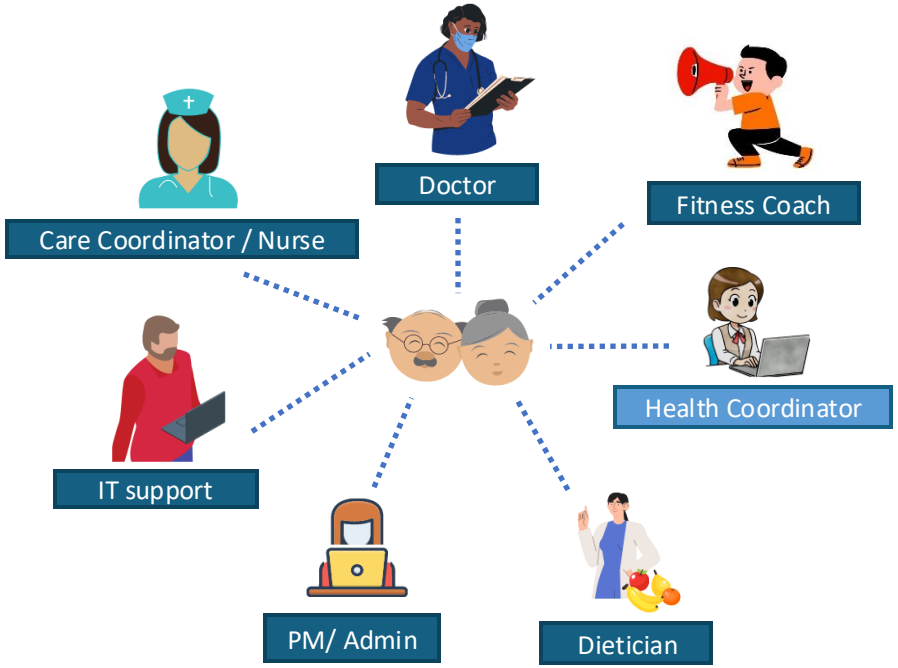
Cardio-Strength Essential
Focuses on cardiovascular fitness, strength, balance, and flexibility.

Physically elite

Functional Training Programme
Boost endurance, strength, and power related to locomotor movement.

Western Silvercare

A community screening, prevention and active ageing programme initiated by St Luke's Hospital to help Bukit Batok residents aged 60 and above to be healthy, physically, mentally and socially. Our healthcare team conducts health screening and support with a system of monitoring, health education, intervention and follow up to achieve the following:



1. **Preventive care** through screening & early intervention
2. Foster a **sense of ownership** of health for seniors
3. Promote **active aging** & reduction of physical frailty
4. Improve **cognitive health**
5. Reduce **social isolation**

W.O.W. - Strength Building Exercises

Community Health Post @ Renci Active Ageing Centre

Virtual Community Health Post Pilot @ Fei Yue Blk 183

Community Health Post @ Fei Yue Blk 210A

Health Talks

How can Community Hospitals play a greater role

Primary Care

- **Reinforce GPs/ PCNs** to
  - Care for HSG-enrolled / hospital-discharged patients
  - Care for 'at-risk' complex patients with frequent admission to AHs

Direct Admission

Community Hospitals

Expedite discharges from CH

Reinforce care @ home

- Intensify care-coordination for patients with complex medical / social needs
- Intensify caregiver training & support

Direct Admission

Aged Care

- **Reinforce NHs/ AAC/ Home Care providers**
  - Care for AH/CH discharged patients
  - Care for 'at-risk' complex and EoL patients with frequent admission to AH
- **Reinforce AACs** in preventive health & social prescribing to support HSG

Anchor care in the community

Prevent unnecessary admissions, Reduce length of stay & Support earlier discharge from AH

Reintegrating back to community

THANK YOU!

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Connect with us:

Serving

Loving

Healing