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Singapore reinforces commitment to eliminating hepatitis C by establishing TTSH-HCSA joint initiative

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Collaboration will strengthen follow-up care by combining fast, saliva-based Hepatitis C antibody testing, which avoids the need for blood draws or finger pricks, with access to specialist medical support.Ã?Â



In celebration of the World Hepatitis Day (28 July), HCSA Community Services and Tan Tock Seng Hospital (TTSH), an anchor hospital of NHG Health, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to reinforce their shared commitment to eliminating Hepatitis C (HCV) among former drug offenders in Singapore, the World Health Organization's global strategy of eliminating Hepatitis C.

This marks a significant step towards the *Educate, Test, Treat!* (ETT) initiative, launched in 2022 with the funding support of Gilead Sciences. Witnessed by Mdm Rahayu Mahzam, Minister of State, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Digital Development and Information, the MoU strengthens closer collaboration between community and healthcare stakeholders to expand HCV screening, and make care and treatment more accessible to prevent serious liver diseases.

Through this latest phase of the ETT Initiative, a continued partnership with TTSH has been formalized through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). This collaboration will strengthen follow-up care by combining fast, saliva-based Hepatitis C antibody testing, which avoids the need for blood draws or finger pricks, with access to specialist medical support.

From August 2025 to the end of 2026, the initiative aims to screen up to 600 individuals. TTSH will provide a comprehensive suite of services, including educational outreach, conducting HCV screenings, confirming chronic HCV infection with HCV viral load testing in the clinic, assessing for early signs of liver fibrosis, prescribing antiviral therapy, and confirming cure after treatment completion. The hospital will also connect patients with HCSA for financial guidance and support services.

The first phase of ETT initiative in 2023 achieved its target recruitment of 210 participants. Phase 2, launched in 2024, continues to aim to make Hepatitis C screening more accessible to ensure individuals receive timely medical care at the hospital. This phase expands its outreach by working closely with more halfway houses, targeting up to 400 participants for screening. To date, Phase 2, which will complete in 2025, has reached 85% of its screening target – Among them, 93% of participants who were tested HCV Antibody positive, and 68.5% of those who were confirmed with active HCV infection have received early and appropriate medical treatment. This progress has been made possible through strong collaboration among halfway houses and program partners like Gilead Sciences and Tzu Chi Foundation, providing essential medical, financial, and social support.

“This partnership marks a significant step to support former drug offenders in reclaiming their health and dignity. By breaking down barriers to care, we are not only treating a disease, but we are also restoring hope,” said Mrs Kim Lang Khalil, Chief Executive Officer, HCSA Community Services.

“Tan Tock Seng Hospital remains committed to delivering specialist care beyond hospital walls and into the community. Through close collaboration with participating halfway houses, we are making tangible progress toward turning the vision of Hepatitis C elimination among former drug offenders in Singapore into reality,” said Dr Yew Kuo Chao, Senior Consultant from the Department of Gastroenterology and Hepatology, Tan Tock Seng Hospital, NHG Health.

“At Gilead, we remain deeply committed to working closely and collaboratively with local partners to reach vulnerable populations, reduce health disparities, and ensure that every individual—regardless of background—has access to the care they need. In support of the WHO’s hepatitis elimination goal, Gilead is proud to collaborate with HCSA Community Services and other local partners. We are encouraged to see this network grow stronger year by year, reflecting the power of partnership in driving meaningful change,” said Ms. Cathy Su, General Manager, Taiwan, Hong Kong & Singapore, Gilead Sciences.