

LEADING HEALTHCARE

The newsletter of the Healthcare Leadership College

Dean's Message

Change and Transformation

Change in a system is usually painful. Change gurus mention the need for a burning platform as a driver for change. The burning platform that Daryl Conner described in his first book, "Managing at the Speed of Change", was a Piper Alpha oil drilling platform in the North Sea in 1988. In this tragedy, 168 men lost their lives.

In healthcare in Singapore today, we have our burning platform: the most rapidly ageing population in the world, and rapidly rising healthcare costs. We cannot be complacent about our healthcare costs even though our spending as a percentage of GDP is lower than for most developed nations. This may give us a false sense of comfort. But in fact, our healthcare expenditures are growing at a very fast rate; between 2010 and 2014, total healthcare spending grew by almost 50%, due to factors such as the rapidly ageing population, changes in disease patterns, and advent of new medical technologies.

Burning platforms are supposed to motivate people and strengthen their resolve for the implementation of new strategies and new ways of doing things. They give a sense of urgency. Unfortunately, the sense of urgency and tenacious commitment to change is not shared equally in an organisation. Tolstoy said: "Everyone thinks of changing the world but no one thinks of changing himself". Within our systems, there are units or people who will resist or delay because change is against their interests, not necessary, too difficult or too painful.

In our nation, the clusters are finally configured in an organised way. The time of pilgrimages to Kaiser, Geisinger and Jönköping is over. We have to do it in Singapore.

In our regional health systems, the general medicine departments and polyclinics are working hard to effect this change. They will get it right faster, however, once they become accountable for their own patients.

Associate Professor Aymeric Lim
Dean, Healthcare Leadership College
Vice-Dean, Dean's Office, Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine

As we move into the second half of 2017, many of us would have started to look back and reflect on the impact of our work.

What differences have we made to Singapore healthcare? What can we do as leaders, to drive the changes necessary to face our imminent healthcare challenges? How do we lead our teams and persuade our stakeholders, to come along on this journey?

We may not have all the answers to these difficult questions. However, we can draw inspiration and courage from leaders and everyday heroes around us who have cleared new paths and forged extraordinary dreams into reality.

Highlights



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Yean (Frontier Healthcare Group)
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Insights and Perspectives

Leadership Dialogue with Mr Hsieh Fu Hua

Chairman, UOB Group / Chairman-Designate, National University Health System

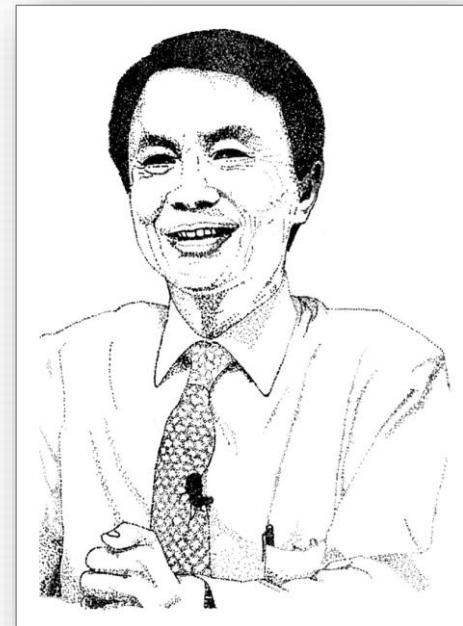
The Healthcare Leadership College brings you Mr Hsieh Fu Hua's leadership perspectives from a recent Leadership Dialogue between him and participants of the 2017 Strategic Leadership Programme held in July 2017.

Mr Hsieh Fu Hua is the Chairman of the United Overseas Bank and a board member of GIC. He has had 40 years of experience in banking and capital markets in Asia, previously serving as the Chief Executive Officer of the Singapore Exchange, and as board member of Temasek Holdings. He also serves on the boards of several non-profit organisations. He is President of the National Council of Social Service and Chairman of the National Gallery Singapore.

Mr Hsieh chairs the Board of Trustees of NUS, and has recently been appointed Chairman-designate to NUHS.

“Leadership is about nurturing the soul of an organization.”

- Hsieh Fu Hua



(Illustration by Trevor Chua, HLC)

Q
A

What were some key influences in your leadership journey?

My deepest impression and understanding of what it meant to be a leader came from a play that I read at school, “A Man for All Seasons”. Sir Thomas More, the protagonist in the play, was a man whose deepest conviction remained constant even in the face of extreme pressure from his King. He eventually paid the ultimate price of his life for sticking to his beliefs. That message has stuck with me through all these years: a true leader has a “core” that is inviolable, no matter what the price is. That to me, is the litmus test of leadership.

Q
A

You speak about the “core” of leadership. How would you define this “core”?

Let me use an analogy to illustrate. For athletes, dancers, martial arts practitioners, they need strong core muscles to hold themselves stable, so that their bodies can express their power and agility to the fullest. It is the same in leadership: leaders need to have a strong core that holds them steadfast. That core is their sense of purpose, values and moral compass - it must be firm and not waver.

I also believe that it takes a “crucible of crisis” to form a leader. Leadership requires tremendous resilience, it can only be forged by going through tough times and making tough decisions. These experiences strengthen the core and make you a stronger and more empathetic leader.

Q
A
What should the role of a leader be?

A leader's role changes depending on the situation. In times of crisis, the leader should lead from the front: be visible, demonstrate confidence and control, and take the hard punches together with your people. At other times, the leader should support his team from behind. Everyone needs someone to lead them. If you do not have a leader, you will miss a few steps and you will fail to perform as you should. The leader is someone you can account to, so that you continue to seek ways to do your best.



Mr Hsieh Fu Hua (Photo: NUS News)

"As a leader, you must believe that you can make a difference. You must be an active agent of change."

Q
A
How do you balance the need to take tough decisions as a leader, versus having a heart for the people you lead?

When I was Chief Executive of SGX, I removed a quarter of my key leadership team within the first month of coming on board, and 10% of the SGX workforce within the first three months. Very difficult, but it was about doing what was right and making a call for the greater good.

It is similar to a surgeon performing a life-saving operation: you make a quick surgical cut, remove the tumor, stem the bleeding, and after that, the most important part, you have a duty of care to restore the patient's health. It is not about simply cutting and stitching up. Leadership is a human endeavor: leaders must care and continue to care, even when they need to make unpleasant choices.

Remember, when you make tough decisions, it is not simply about exercising the power to make that decision. Most critically, it is about doing this in the right way: properly, fairly, and compassionately. Even if individuals leave an organization, there are still ways in which you can help them and lessen the pain.

Q
A
Many organisations do not seem to have a high tolerance for failure, what are your views on this?

The tone and culture of an organization comes from the top – whether there is a spirit of risk-taking, enterprise, and innovation, is very much determined by the leader. When mistakes happen, the leader must be willing to stand by his people. Excellence is not about perfection, it is about doing better. And we can only do better by trying and trying, making mistakes and coming back again. A leader's role is ultimately to nurture the soul of the organization: a good culture will lead to success.



Participants of the Strategic Leadership Programme (SLP) 2017 with Mr Hsieh Fu Hua (Photo: HLC)

Q
A

What is one area of leadership that you think the public sector could improve on?

In the early days, top leadership in the public sector acted decisively and boldly. Today there seems to be less willingness to take risks and act quickly. There is a lot more discussion and seeking to achieve consensus. One area that the public sector leadership needs to improve on is *boldness*.

Q
A

What are some important lessons you have learnt about managing change?

Always engage and communicate. Be open, listen, relate to people. It is absolutely critical to sense what the ground is feeling and thinking. In health care, you are lucky in that the "purpose" is very clear and the need for change is also compelling and urgent.

At the end of the day, it boils down to building trust. People will follow you if they trust you.

**"Excellence is not about perfection,
it is about doing better. And we can
only do better by trying and trying
again."**

Healthcare Policy Series

Primary Care Transformation

In May 2017, the Healthcare Leadership College (HLC) organised its 7th Healthcare Policy Series (HPS) seminar around the theme on Primary Care Transformation.

The two speakers, Dr Elaine Tan, Director, Primary & Community Care Division, MOH and Dr Tham Tat Yean, Chief Executive Officer, Frontier Healthcare Group shared their thoughts with the packed audience.



Our vision: Every Singaporean to have one primary family doctor.

Specialists and GPs need to partner and support each other so that patients can receive good care in the community and age well. Specialists have an important contribution towards primary care transformation!

Patients and their families need to be engaged and buy into the shift towards care anchored in primary care, and preventive health.

GPs should work together and form networks. This will allow them to share information and resources, so that their patients can be better cared for.

GPs have an important role to play in transforming healthcare. We are working together with GPs to develop an integrated system of coordinated and comprehensive person-centred care to meet evolving population needs.

GPs practising in the community will increasingly require nursing, allied health and care coordinator support to help them manage complex conditions in an ageing population.

Some attendees told us what they reflected on for primary care transformation for Singapore.



"There needs to be close integration efforts between the hospitals and other community health and social agencies to strengthen coordination and provide holistic care to the patients. The grooming of future-ready healthcare clinicians to meet the changing healthcare needs of our population is important and they need to prepare themselves and work closely to manage more complex cases that are on the rise."

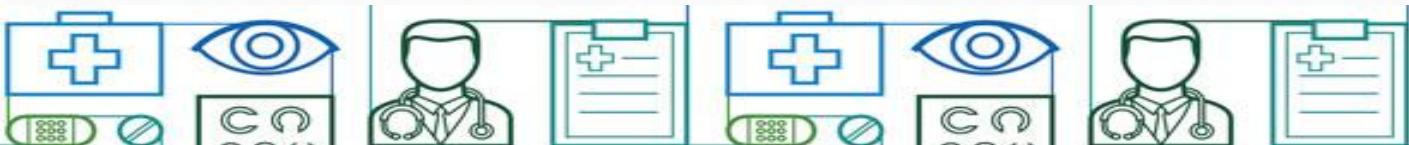
Dr Lew Yee Jen, CEO, National University Polyclinics

"This is useful as Nursing defines the roles of Community Nurses in the various community settings, including primary care. Having clarity of roles, open communication and collaboration through shared care, governance and support structures with stakeholders in the primary care would help us shift care beyond hospital to community and beyond healthcare to health for the population."

Ms Paulin Koh, Chief Nurse, Changi General Hospital

"We need to change our current primary care model to get GPs and community Pharmacists to provide holistic care collaboratively to patients with chronic diseases in managing their medication needs - 1 patient , 1 GP , 1 Pharmacist concept."

Mr Wu Tuck Seng, Deputy Director (Pharmacy Department), National University Hospital



Upcoming Programmes

Distinguished Speakers Series –
An Afternoon with Mr Philip Yeo
11th August 2017

Emerging Leadership Programme
17th – 25th August 2017

Nursing, Allied Health & Administration
Leadership Programme
11th – 14th September 2017

Healthcare Policy & Governance Programme
4th – 12th October 2017

Introduction to Systems Thinking
12th – 13th October 2017

Participation for the above programmes is strictly by nomination.
Kindly contact your respective HR Department if you are interested to join any of the above programmes

Leading Healthcare Team

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About the Healthcare Leadership College

The Healthcare Leadership College, a division of MOH Holdings, supports the building of strong leadership capacity and capabilities for our national public healthcare system, in line with the Ministry of Health's vision and strategic priorities.

We develop and deliver high quality programmes and other learning platforms for public healthcare leaders, covering topics such as leadership and organisational development, public service ethos and values, and key healthcare policies and issues.

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