

# SingHealth, SMU to train undergrads in healthcare management

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In another boost to the healthcare workforce here, a new undergraduate programme in healthcare administration will start next January, it was announced yesterday.

The Health Economics and Management programme will be offered as a second major at Singapore Management University (SMU), in partnership with SingHealth, one of the three healthcare clusters here.

Students will study topics such as health systems and policy, applied analytics in healthcare management, as well as operations and supply chain management. They can also do an internship at any of SingHealth's healthcare institutions. The programme, which is open to SMU students in their first or second year of study, will rope in SingHealth staff to co-teach four courses.

A memorandum of understanding between SingHealth and SMU was signed at the Singapore Healthcare Management Congress yesterday.

Mr Tan Jack Thian, SingHealth's group chief operating officer, said more healthcare administrators will be needed as several new hospitals and nursing homes are due to open. "We are looking at having ready-trained healthcare administrators who can join us, so that there will be less of a learning curve," he said.

This is the second formal training partnership between the two sides. The first is the SMU-SingHealth Graduate Diploma in Healthcare Management and Leadership, launched in 2009. More than 200 clinicians and healthcare administrators from Singapore and elsewhere in Asia have graduated from the programme.

The Singapore Healthcare Management Congress, held at the Sands Expo and Convention Centre, provides a platform for healthcare administrators to share best practices. Senior Minister of State for Health Amy Khor, who was guest of honour at the opening of the congress yesterday, said administrators can "collaborate with professionals to pioneer new care models and manage enterprise risks in innovation".

More than 1,400 healthcare administrators from Asia are attending the three-day congress ending tomorrow.

SMU student Tham Qian Yu, 22, is keen on pursuing a career in the healthcare or information technology sector after graduating in two years with a Bachelor of Science (Information Systems).

He has been volunteering in translation services at Changi General Hospital's accident and emergency department since February last year.

"There is a lot more that can be done in the back end to better manage patients," he said. "I want to show people that both the front-end staff like doctors and nurses as well as administrative staff are equally important."

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