

More funds for NUH staff to train peers in S-E Asia, China

Fung Clinical Fellowship will help staff teach skills abroad and here

By **KASH CHEONG**

HEALTHCARE staff from National University Hospital (NUH) can now tap into an extra \$120,000 a year to train their peers in South-east Asia and China.

This follows a donation of US\$1 million (S\$1.3 million) by the Fung Foundation, the philanthropic arm of global supplies management firm Li & Fung.

The sum has been matched by the Singapore Government.

The total amount of US\$2 million will go into the endowment fund of the National University of Singapore (NUS) and the returns – about \$120,000 annually – will be used to send NUH staff or NUS medical faculty abroad to teach medical skills.

It can also be used to bring young doctors and medical staff from developing countries to NUH to gain experience.

Because the endowment will take time to generate returns, the Fung Foundation also donated an additional US\$100,000 for immediate use.

The new Fung Clinical Fellowship programme was announced by Mr Victor Fung, group chairman of Li & Fung, yesterday at the Fung Healthcare Leadership Summit in Singapore.

Said Fung Foundation's president, Professor Tsui Lap Chee: "This is our way of returning to the community."

Associate Professor Sunil Sethi, who heads NUH's department of laboratory medicine, said: "Previously, we had to plan these overseas trips on an ad-hoc basis and beg, steal or borrow to raise funds. Now we don't need to worry about funding.

"We can also plan for a series of programmes, so there is continuity in training overseas peers; it's not just a one-off thing."

Last month, an NUH team went to Kunming, China, to train peers in rehabilitation care.

"A patient who has suffered a

stroke can be left on the bed, developing bed sores," Prof Sethi said. "Or they can be well rehabilitated, on their feet up and about. Good training in rehab care makes all the difference."

Associate Professor Malcolm Mahadevan, who heads the emergency medicine department, has trained doctors in Timor Leste in trauma-management skills.

"You see young doctors in developing countries, enthusiastic about training, who want to come to Singapore and see our facilities, but they don't have the means," he said.

"This fellowship will help," he added.

The fellowship is open to NUH medical professionals, including doctors, nurses and allied health workers. It is also open to the NUS medical faculty.

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OPENING DOORS FOR OTHERS

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– Associate Professor Malcolm Mahadevan, head of the emergency medicine department at NUH, on how the new fund can be used

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