

# LEADING HEALTHCARE

The newsletter of the Healthcare Leadership College

## INNOVATION - IDEAS THAT BREAK BOUNDARIES AND SPARK TRANSFORMATION

- *Innovation that Transforms - Dean's Message by Prof Pang Weng Sun*
- *Innovation & Resilience - Letter to our Young Leaders by Mr Ho Kwon Ping*
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# Innovation

# That

# Transforms

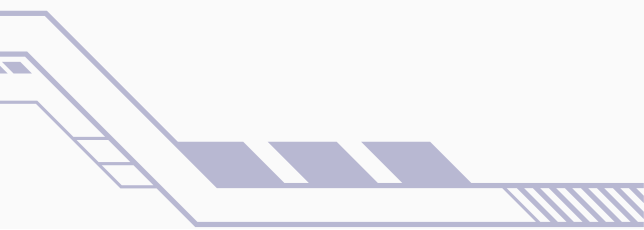



*By Prof Pang Weng Sun, Dean, Healthcare Leadership College*

At the recent HLC Distinguished Speakers lecture, Mr Ho Kwon Ping, Executive Chairman of Banyan Tree Holdings and founding Chairman of the Singapore Management University, spoke about the innovation that Banyan Tree pioneered and became known for - the private all-pool villa concept - which was completely different from the practice of other hotels at the time.

We frequently think of innovation as one of the key solutions to solving problems. Yet, not all innovation is the same. The impact created can be completely different in scale and degree. Most of the time, what we refer to as innovation work focuses on making improvements in existing processes or products. Much less frequently encountered are those innovations which result in a breakthrough impact, and in some cases, a completely new way of doing things. The Banyan Tree concept, as well as the unique high jump technique that Richard Fosbury used at the 1968 Mexico Olympic Games (**see page 6**) are examples of the latter type of innovation.

Singapore has made major innovations in many areas of social and economic policy and practice over the past decades. In healthcare, the introduction of the MediSave scheme in 1983 was a singularly innovative and visionary move. It allowed the implementation of the key philosophy of emphasis on personal responsibility, for the purpose of carefully husbanding our limited healthcare resources and expenses, by supporting Singaporeans to save up in advance for their future healthcare expenses. The MediSave scheme has itself become a critical enabler allowing for further new innovations. Almost every major patient financing scheme that has been introduced in the intervening 40 years has been built upon MediSave, including MediShield Life, CareShield Life, and Medisave for the Chronic Disease Management Programme.





In our healthcare system, we work very hard and invest huge resources of time, manpower and money, to raise quality and improve efficiency. The vast majority of this hard work goes towards existing processes and models, where progress is usually incremental and can take a long time. In many cases, technological advances e.g. in drug advancements, surgical techniques, use of robotics etc., are commonly cited as examples of innovation.

This is similar to how for decades, high jumpers worked on progressively improving their high jump techniques, which were variations of each other, slowly improving their height clearances by a few centimeters at a time. When Richard Fosbury attempted his new jumping technique, it was a completely revolutionary approach, which leapfrogged all previous methods.

While it is important to continuously improve and polish existing processes, building on existing models and thinking may not bring about sufficiently large and fast change to shift the needle for Singapore healthcare, which has to confront myriad issues including escalating manpower needs, rapidly growing financial outlays, and the inexorable demand for ever-more sophisticated technologies and drugs.

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**While it is important to continuously improve and polish existing processes, building on existing models and thinking may not bring about sufficiently large and fast change to shift the needle for Singapore healthcare.**

Could Healthier SG and more crucially, the larger mindset and strategy shift which it sits within, i.e. a pivot away from the traditional acute and specialist-centred healthcare model – be one of the more transformative innovative answers for healthcare?

In healthcare, implementation is crucial to success and the devil is in the details. Behaviour of key stakeholders might not be predictable and it will be highly challenging to influence and shape individuals' health seeking behaviours. Much depends on the finer details of the Healthier SG plan – for which the White Paper was recently debated in Parliament, how key stakeholders such as the private General Practitioners will implement the plan, and how the population will respond to the measures. The challenges are non-trivial, but the benefits, if we succeed, are immeasurably large. Remaining status quo would certainly not be a wise option.



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# Letter to our Young Leaders

It is a nice time to come together after the memory of what COVID-19 has done to us. I would like to speak about my thoughts on the following topics: **Innovation** and **Resilience**.

**Innovation doesn't fall from the sky. We don't wake up and get a Eureka moment. Innovation is always a response to an unmet need.** Therefore, to facilitate and bring about innovation, you need to be always keenly aware of needs and think flexibly about how they can be fulfilled. I recall the experience I had in my younger days when I was planning to build a resort in Phuket. Back then, I was young and did not have enough money to build a large facility with hundreds of hotel rooms. We were also not confident about the resort's appeal to guests, since its location was not ideal and it did not have beach frontage. So I thought about building individual pool villas and starting a spa within the resort. **It was a different idea that turned the site's disadvantages into a unique advantage.** That resort in Phuket became the very first Banyan Tree.

The next question we should ask is if innovation can be structured. When I was a Board Director of Singapore Airlines, I was in charge of a programme where we had to map out the touch points of the passengers from their booking of flights and their checking-in process, to when they were boarding the plane and when they were arriving at their destination. From those touch points, we could look at where the unmet needs were and think of solutions. I developed the same structure in Banyan Tree.

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Innovation is always a response to an unmet need.**



**Mr Ho Kwon Ping** is the Founder and Executive Chairman of Banyan Tree Holdings and Laguna Resorts and Hotels, and Executive Chairman of Thai Wah Public Company. All three family-owned companies are listed in Singapore and Thailand. He is also the founding and current Chairman of the Board of Trustees of Singapore Management University.

Among various awards, Mr Ho has received the London Business School Entrepreneurship Award; CEO of the Year at the Singapore Corporate Awards; CNBC Travel Business Leader Award; Distinguished Alumnus Award from the National University of Singapore; and Lifetime Achievement Awards from the American Creativity Association, China Hotel Investment Summit and Australia Hotel Investment Summit. Honored for his contributions and accomplishments in the hotel industry in the Asia Pacific region and globally, Mr. Ho is the only two-time recipient of Hotel Investment Conference Asia Pacific - HICAP's Innovation Award (2003) and Lifetime Achievement Award (2019) in its 30-year establishment. For his services to the country, he has been decorated with the Meritorious Service Medal and Distinguished Service Order by the Singapore Government.

We could then determine the parts that were outdated, and how they could be improved. This is an example of a systematic way in which innovation can be structured. It does not need to be ad hoc.

There is a perception that innovation needs to be grand. Yet the people who are in the best position to innovate are our frontline people as they are on the ground and they are the ones who deal with our customers and members of the public. Hence, we need to encourage them and create the conditions for them to feel empowered to propose and implement new ideas. ***The leader is the facilitator of innovation, not the one who comes up with all the grand ideas.***



## Resilience

I have been through tsunamis and SARS, and now COVID-19. For those of us who have faced these crises, our resilience has been tested. In my sector, we were tested in many ways. Having gone through many ups and downs, I say, ***don't waste a good crisis. Build upon it and create the institutional memories. When the next crisis comes, we would have remembered the resilience that was once built on a previous one.*** For example, in an earlier downturn, Banyan Tree had no choice but to cut salaries. We had a big Town Hall where we requested staff to help the company by taking unpaid leave. The leadership team led by example by taking the most unpaid leave. People came together. By the second unforeseen downturn, staff adapted to this initiative as if it was in their DNA.

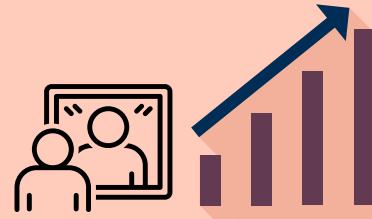
They naturally volunteered to take unpaid leave. When the crisis was over, we went all the way to reward our employees. People come together in solidarity during difficult times. There is a strong mutual trust that is built up among all of us. ***That reservoir of trust is what we tap upon for resilience in the future.***

**Build upon it (crisis) and**



**create the institutional memories.**

Pride doesn't mean that everything we have done is perfect and cannot be more. We know where we stand today, and we can be as critical as we should be of our system. Otherwise nothing is going to improve.



## Closing Comments

There are similarities between the hospitality and healthcare sectors, where both are centered upon people. The key is to recognize that each individual is a unique individual, not just another customer or another patient. The whole joy of being where we are at, is because we enjoy making people happy and in your case, healing them back to health.

I have the utmost respect and gratitude for our healthcare system. Singapore has made much progress and has many achievements that we as Singaporeans can be proud of. But ***pride doesn't mean that everything we have done is perfect and cannot be more. We know where we stand today, and we can be as critical as we should be of our system. Otherwise nothing is going to improve.*** We can be both proud and lovingly critical of ourselves at the same time. This is how we can continue to innovate and progress forward.



Mr Ho Kwon Ping, speaking at HLC's 5th Distinguished Speakers Series.

# From Flop to Success: A Lesson on Innovation

» See anything unusual in this photo?

It's a photo of a high jumper clearing the bar. To our eyes today, nothing seems unusual about this jump



A Radically Innovative Jump

And yet, back in 1968 during the Mexico Olympics, this was the jump, by an American athlete called Richard Fosbury, which completely revolutionized high jumping. Up till then, no one had done the high jump this way, at a competition of this level. It was completely unimaginable – just think how strange this must have looked to the audiences of the time!

Richard Fosbury's "flops" at the 1968 Olympics gave him an Olympic Gold, set a new Olympic Record, and ensured his name a place in athletics history, as the inventor of the "Fosbury Flop", a technique which has been used by high jumpers ever since then.

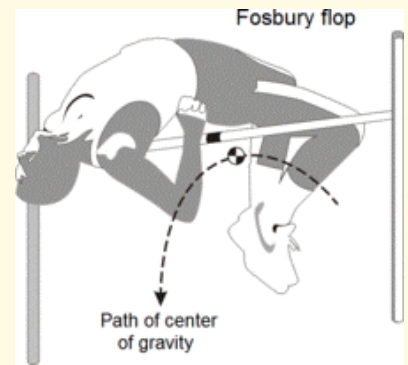
Prior to Fosbury's "Olympic flop", high jumpers had jumped in one of three ways: the Scissors, the Straddle, and the Western Roll.

All three methods involved the high jumper approaching the bar face on, or side on. These methods ensured that the jumper would have the opportunity to land on their feet after clearing the bar, thereby avoiding injury.

But Fosbury was not good at the conventional high jump techniques of the day (he tried to jump over a chair using the scissors technique but crashed into it and broke his wrist). In order for him to be able to continue in high jump athletics, he would have to come up with a radical innovation.



The time and the conditions were right for innovation to take place. By the 1960s, deep foam mats had begun to replace the previous sawdust and sand that were used for landing previously. This was a critical environmental change that set the stage for Fosbury to try out the audacious method of landing on his back, rather than on his feet. This proved to be a technically superior method, because using the Fosbury Flop, the jumper's body could progressively "roll" over the bar while the centre of gravity remained as much as 20cm below the bar. This method gave the high jumper a huge extra "lift", compared to the previous methods where the jumper had to lift his entire body's centre of gravity over the bar to clear it. The Fosbury flop has since become the dominant technique used for high jumping today.



## There are some key lessons that we can draw from the Fosbury Flop:

- 1 Environment Drives Innovation**

The Fosbury Flop was invented because the environmental change – use of thick foam mats – allowed this innovation to happen. Before that, landing on the back, on a hard landing surface, would have resulted in serious injury.
- 2 Keep Experimenting and Trying**

Fosbury did not achieve instant success, neither was he able to replicate his new technique consistently when he initially tried it. However, he was undeterred and kept on experimenting with his new method.
- 3 Be Open to Wild Ideas**

Fosbury literally turned conventional thinking and accepted wisdom of the time ("this is the best way to do this, everyone does it this way") on its head. By just going with what seemed to be a wild idea and what his gut sense/ body was telling him, he discovered a better, more efficient way to do a high jump.

**We can extend these lessons to our work and daily lives.  
Has your environment changed? Has your landing mat changed?  
Is there now a new and better way to carry out a task or achieve  
a desired outcome? Are you still sticking to similar methods?  
Or are you willing to experiment and try something different?**

» For more information, the short 4-minute Olympic clip below is a good watch, as is the article from Mayo Oshin which inspired this article.

### References:

*How One Man Changed the High Jump Forever. The Olympics On the Record*

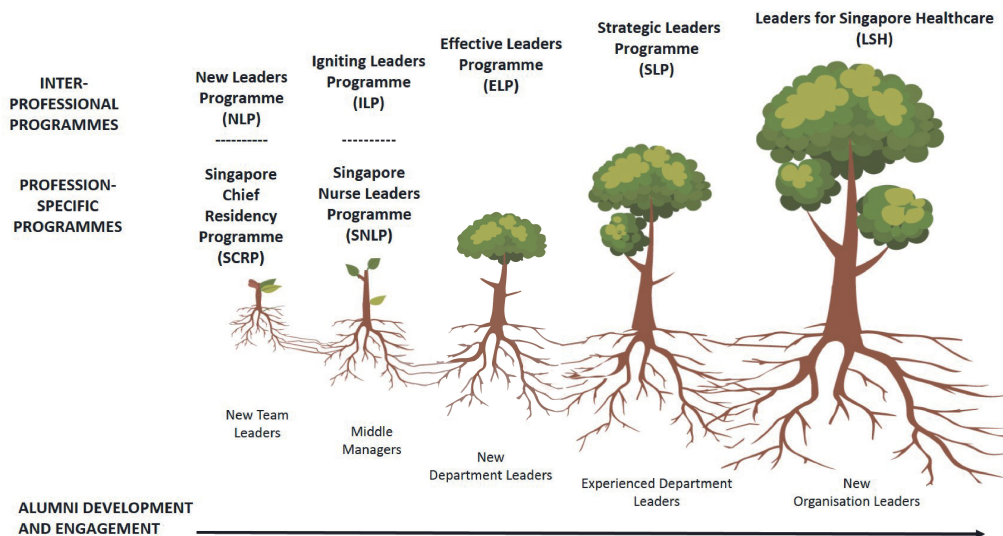
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CZsH46Ek2ao>

<https://mayooshin.com/dick-fosbury/>





# Leadership Milestone Programmes Cross-Profession



- Foster a one healthcare family mindset
- Build shared values and ethos amongst public healthcare leaders
- Develop understanding of key healthcare policies, the rationale and principles behind the policies
- Strengthen leadership capabilities of healthcare leaders to enable change and drive strategies to transform healthcare delivery
- Nurture a community of healthcare leaders across professions and across the healthcare family to bring about greater collaboration and sharing, and inspiration to the next generation of leaders

## NEW LEADERS PROGRAMME (NLP)



The New Leaders Programme (NLP) supports the development of high potential first time team leaders in the healthcare family.

The transition from being an individual contributor to leading a team is a significant and challenging milestone. The NLP encourages participants to explore their new role: How does the Singapore healthcare system work? What is my role in the larger healthcare system? What does it mean to lead? What does it mean to lead in the healthcare family?

**Programme Manager(s):**  
Sandra Choong  
Jennie Tan  
Carol Tang  
Nicole Lee

The NLP also provides opportunities for participants to network across healthcare institutions and professions.

## IGNITING LEADERS PROGRAMME (ILP)

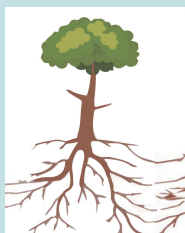
The Igniting Leaders Programme (ILP) aims to strengthen participants' systems perspectives by providing opportunities for them to examine our healthcare philosophy and policy choices, and understand our larger strategic goals and priorities. This also helps participants understand one another's role in the healthcare system.

The ILP will enable participants to gain insight into their own leadership practice, especially in building their teams, and allows them to re-ignite their sense of purpose in healthcare. The ILP will also be an important platform for participants to foster peer support networks across healthcare institutions and professions.



**Programme Manager:**  
Chia Li Hui

## EFFECTIVE LEADERS PROGRAMME (ELP)



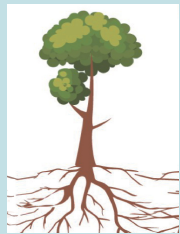
**Programme Manager:**  
Goh You Li  
Jared Koh

The Effective Leaders Programme (ELP) is designed to deepen participants' understanding of the healthcare system - its complexity and strategic direction, and widen their perspectives beyond the professional and institutional viewpoints.

The ELP also supports participants in reflecting on their personal leadership practice, and focus on driving change and building teams with a collective mission.

The programme emphasises the building of shared experiences and perspectives among participants, and fosters a trusted peer support community for mutual support and collaboration.

## STRATEGIC LEADERS PROGRAMME (SLP)



The Strategic Leaders Programme (SLP) will support our senior leaders to adopt a one healthcare mindset, and appreciate the importance of a whole of system approach that include perspectives beyond healthcare.

Participants will have the opportunity to reflect on their collective leadership and collaborative practice as they lead larger and more diverse teams within and across healthcare institutions.

The SLP is also designed for participants to deepen networks and relationships among their peers to strengthen collaboration in the healthcare family.

Programme Manager:  
Chu Min Lian

## LEADERS FOR SINGAPORE HEALTHCARE (LSH)

The Leaders for Singapore Healthcare (LSH) is HLC's new signature programme for senior healthcare leaders with organisational level responsibilities.

As senior healthcare leaders, participants will examine their roles as leaders of and for the Singapore health eco-system, with a larger influence across institutions and clusters, and beyond public healthcare.

The programme is conducted over four months, in four segments, and includes a study trip.



Programme Manager:  
Chu Min Lian

## Leadership Milestone Programmes Profession-Specific

### SINGAPORE CHIEF RESIDENCY PROGRAMME (SCRCP)



Programme Manager:  
Regine Tan

Singapore's healthcare landscape is evolving rapidly with new delivery systems, policies, and educational structures. In this time of transformation, effective physician leadership is essential, and the Singapore Chief Residency Programme (SCRCP) prepares tomorrow's doctors to meet these challenges, promote excellence in the medical education, and advance Singapore's Public Healthcare System.

### SINGAPORE NURSE LEADERS PROGRAMME (SNLP)

The Singapore Nurse Leaders Programme (SNLP) is developed as part of the Future Nursing Career Review Committee's (FNCRC) recommendation to equip future nursing leaders with prior experience in community care before progressing to take on higher leadership positions.

With an increasingly system-level approach towards nursing at the RHS-level, the programme is designed to equip nurses with the necessary knowledge and skills to lead care across multiple facilities- acute and community sectors. The SNLP aims to groom level 2 nurse leaders to be change agents with strong leadership and policy perspectives, and this is achieved via a 2-prong approach, in-person seminars and attachment to the community care sector.

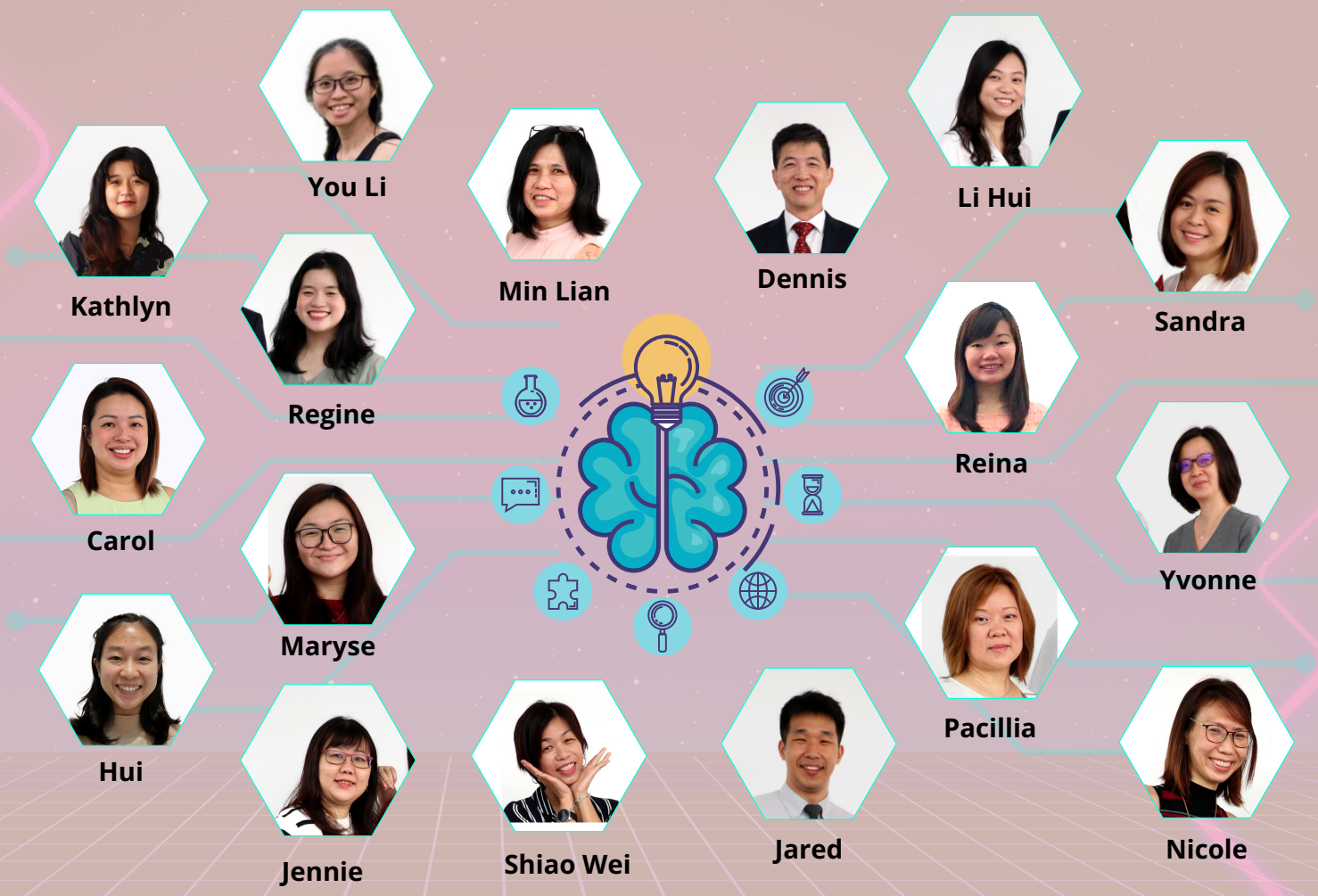


Programme Manager:  
Maryse Koh

## Alumni Programmes

The College also hosts events and talks for alumni of its milestone programmes, such as fireside chats with senior healthcare leaders, policy workshops, and learning journeys. Alumni events are open by invitation only, and most fees are fully subsidised by the Healthcare Leadership College.

Programme Manager(s):  
Goh You Li  
Chu Min Lian  
Nicole Lee  
Chia Li Hui



# ABOUT THE HEALTHCARE LEADERSHIP COLLEGE

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

We aspire to be a keystone and trusted partner in developing leaders of and for Singapore healthcare, and in building bridges and growing community across agencies, clusters, institutions and professions in the Singapore healthcare ecosystem.

Find out more here: [www.hlc.mohh.com.sg](http://www.hlc.mohh.com.sg)

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We hope you enjoy the newsletter. The next issue of Leading Healthcare will be in December 2022. We welcome your feedback and suggestions. Do drop the Leading Healthcare team a note at [hlc@mohh.com.sg](mailto:hlc@mohh.com.sg).

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