

The Sum of All Parts

TTSH CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER DR EUGENE SOH, 39, WORKED WITH FOUR 'GIANTS' WHO PREPARED HIM FOR HIS BIGGEST PROJECT TO DATE.

INTERVIEW GENE KHOR

➔ **"SINCE JOINING** the National Healthcare Group (NHG) in late 2003, I've had the privilege of working with four 'giants' of Singapore healthcare who have taught me invaluable lessons. My first boss was Agency for Integrated Care CEO Dr Jason Cheah, who was Chief Projects Officer of NHG then. His advice regarding project management was just one word — 'people'. And not just how the patients would be taken care of, but the healthcare staff, as well.

I gained management insights in 2004 as secretary to the NHG Chairmen of Medical Boards Committee led by then-NHG Assistant CEO (Clinical), Prof Chee Yam Cheng (currently Group CEO, NHG). Before moving onto a new initiative or programme, he would ask what we could learn from it. It was important to him that we learned while doing, and that learning not be an afterthought.

Another healthcare giant I owe a lot to is our former NHG and TTSH CEO, Dr Lim Suet Wun. He asked me, 'Do you want to be COO of operations or COO of the hospital?' Though I was unsure what he meant then, his question made me contribute better at the systems level. Dr Lim once said, 'Never ask for a promotion. Instead, ask how you can contribute and a promotion will come'. This became a guiding principle for me.

My last lesson came from my current boss, NHG Deputy Group CEO (Regional Health) and TTSH CEO Prof Philip Choo. He had the foresight to learn geriatrics medicine in Britain years before Singapore's ageing population became a concern. He's quite a visionary and made me realise the importance of looking further ahead.

These four giants have given me invaluable lessons on 'People', 'Learning', 'Leadership through Contribution' and 'Vision', which has shaped my involvement in the conceptualisation of the Health City Novena Master Plan. Still in its early stages, the project will grow to connect the different medical service providers in the Novena area. The result will be a Health City which integrates seamlessly with the surrounding community. We want healthcare that serves not just patients but also the community to encourage healthy living for all. We want Health City Novena to embrace our community, and have our community embrace us as their healthcare partner. This will define the legacy of care that is NHG and TTSH." **UV**



WE WANT HEALTH CITY NOVENA TO EMBRACE OUR COMMUNITY, AND HAVE OUR COMMUNITY EMBRACE US AS THEIR HEALTHCARE PARTNER.

PHOTO: EALBERT HO