

## MEDIA RELEASE

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### **NUS SAW SWEE HOCK SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH TRAINS PUBLIC HEALTH AMBASSADORS TO PROMOTE COVID-19 VACCINATION**

Singapore — The NUS Saw Swee Hock School of Public Health (SSHSPH) is organising a virtual public forum on 5 June 2021 to address COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy with the support of the Rotary Club of Singapore (RCS). The virtual public forum, “Why Hesitate? All You Want to Know about the COVID-19 Vaccination” will officially launch the RCS Public Health Ambassador Programme to promote vaccination among the wider community in Singapore.

With the recent surge of local community cases, Singapore has been ramping up the COVID-19 vaccination programme to the mass population. However, vaccine hesitancy is a real problem globally and in Singapore. There has been considerable misinformation shared about the COVID-19 vaccines since the end of last year. Many people continue to have questions and doubts about the safety and efficacy of the vaccines.

In collaboration with RCS, experts from the SSHSPH will be training over 150 participants – RCS Interactors, Rotaractors and Rotarians – with the public health knowledge and skills to help the communities in which they serve as Public Health Ambassadors to better weather the many ongoing challenges of Covid-19. Besides understanding about vaccine hesitancy, the training also aims to build the participants' knowledge and skillsets in grappling with insecurity and gear up Singapore's social capital in the new "new normal, where Covid-19 remains endemic.

During the virtual forum, SSHSPH experts will answer questions from the public and explain how the different COVID-19 vaccines work, what the possible adverse effects are, and the benefits of vaccination. Ms Low Yen Ling, Minister of State, Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth & Ministry of Trade and Industry, and the Chairperson of Mayors' Committee & Mayor, South West District, will be the Guest of Honour for the event. A closed-door workshop for RCS participants will be conducted after the forum as part of the Public Health Ambassador Programme.

“Public education and clear transparent communication are vital to reduce vaccine hesitancy. We hope that this collaboration with the Rotary Club of Singapore will enable us to reach out to more people and encourage public confidence in COVID-19 vaccination. Improving knowledge and confidence to COVID-19 vaccines is critical as mass vaccination is the only way to protect ourselves and our loved ones, and allow us to live with the disease in the long term.” said Professor Teo Yik Ying, Dean of SSHSPH.

Mr Dinesh Sharma, RCS President, said “Despite efforts of the health authorities in educating the public on the safety and benefits of the vaccine, there remains significant pockets within the population in Singapore that are hesitant to take the vaccine. We are happy to collaborate with the Saw Swee Hock School of Public Health, an invaluable partner in providing training to our RCS members to help promote vaccination and enable the safe reopening of the Singapore economy to save both lives and livelihoods.”

The SSHSPH and RCS signed a Letter of Collaboration on 23 April 2021 to organise the Public Health Ambassador Programme and the public forum. This inaugural programme and collaboration is expected to lead to a long-term working relationship that will empower RCS youths and members with public health knowledge in helping Singapore communities weather the on-going challenges of COVID-19 as well as other public health challenges.

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### **Chinese Glossary**

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## About the National University Health System

The National University Health System (NUHS) aims to transform how illness is prevented and managed by discovering causes of disease, development of more effective treatments through collaborative multidisciplinary research and clinical trials, and creation of better technologies and care delivery systems in partnership with others who share the same values and vision.

Institutions in the NUHS Group include the National University Hospital, Ng Teng Fong General Hospital, Jurong Community Hospital and Alexandra Hospital; three National Specialty Centres - National University Cancer Institute, Singapore, National University Heart Centre, Singapore and National University Centre for Oral Health, Singapore; the National University Polyclinics; Jurong Medical Centre; and three NUS health sciences schools – NUS Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine (including the Alice Lee Centre for Nursing Studies), NUS Faculty of Dentistry and NUS Saw Swee Hock School of Public Health.

With member institutions under a common governance structure, NUHS creates synergies for the advancement of health by integrating patient care, health science education and biomedical research.

As a Regional Health System, NUHS works closely with health and social care partners across Singapore to develop and implement programmes that contribute to a healthy and engaged population in the Western part of Singapore.

For more information, please visit <http://www.nuhs.edu.sg>.

## About the NUS Saw Swee Hock School of Public Health (SSHSPH)

Building upon decades of experience in research, training and practice in epidemiology and public health, the Saw Swee Hock School of Public Health (SSHSPH), under the National University of Singapore, was established in October 2011 as Singapore's national school of public health. The School is also a member of the National University Health System (NUHS).

The School aims to continually foster healthier communities in Singapore and the region, and impact public health programmes and policies through its robust educational programmes and translational cross-disciplinary research work on cohort studies and life course epidemiology, infectious disease research, health technology assessments, health promotion, workplace safety and health, health systems evaluation and health services research. An interdisciplinary approach, augmented by rigorous training, applicable research and regional partnerships, places SSHSPH at the forefront of public health knowledge discovery and practice in Asia.

The School actively collaborates with many partners including the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, Karolinska Institutet, Harvard School of Public Health and University of Michigan School of Public Health. Its flagship programme, the Master of Public Health (MPH) degree, attracts students from a wide range of disciplines from within Singapore and throughout the region.

For more information, please visit <https://sph.nus.edu.sg/>