MEDIA RELEASE

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$30.5 million philanthropic funds raised for medical research and education at SingHealth Duke-NUS Academic Medical Centre inaugural Gala Dinner

- Four new Professorships established since April 2014
- Nine exciting research and education initiatives supported

Singapore, 30 August 2015 – The inaugural SingHealth Duke-NUS Gala Dinner 2015 closed on a high note with more than $30 million raised for medical research and education initiatives. More than 700 guests attended the event at the Ritz-Carlton, Millenia Singapore with Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance Mr Tharman Shanmugaratnam gracing the occasion as Guest of Honour.

Themed ‘A Symphony of Stars’, the Gala Dinner brought together clinicians, researchers, educators and donors who share a strong conviction to improve health outcomes and quality of life for patients and the community. The event also celebrated a decade of successful partnership between SingHealth and Duke-NUS Graduate Medical School in establishing an Academic Medical Centre, which harnesses the collective synergies of education and research to advance the frontiers of Medicine so that we can improve health and provide the best care for patients.

During the event, DPM Tharman joined the leaders of SingHealth and Duke-NUS in a cake cutting ceremony to mark this significant milestone. He also witnessed cheque presentations from three major donors to various Academic Clinical Programmes (ACPs), which are collaboration platforms that bring together clinicians, researchers and scientists across different institutions from the same clinical specialty.

- Dr Chen Ai Ju and family donated $1 million in memory of Dr Chen’s late husband, Dr Ling Chaw Ming. This gift will support Lymphoma Genomic Translational
Research under the Dr Ling Chaw Ming Lymphoma Research Endowment Fund in support of Oncology ACP.

- Children’s Cancer Foundation contributed $2.5 million to establish the Tan Cheng Lim – CCF Professorship in Paediatric Oncology in support of Paediatrics ACP. Named in honour of one of Singapore’s pioneers in paediatric oncology, Emeritus Consultant, Professor Tan Cheng Lim, this Professorship will build upon his excellent legacy and pioneer contributions in paediatric medicine to pave the way for a future that is free of childhood cancer as new treatments and cures are uncovered through research.

- Viva Foundation for Children with Cancer pledged $8.2 million towards the VIVA-KKH Paediatric Brain and Solid Tumours Programme. A cheque of $4.2 million was presented at the Gala Dinner and VIVA Foundation is seeking to raise a further $4 million towards this Programme.

Other key donors include the Lee Foundation which gave more than $1.8 million in support of research and education programmes in cancer, cardiovascular sciences, internal medicine and obstetrics and gynaecology; as well as the New Century Foundation Limited which donated $1 million to the Lymphoma Endowed Research Fund in support of Oncology ACP.

In addition to the Tan Cheng Lim-CCF Professorship in Paediatric Oncology, three other Professorships in Cardiovascular Medicine, Plastic Surgery and Regenerative Medicine were also established with the funds raised. These endowed Professorships are created in appreciation to the donor as well as a lasting tribute to the medical luminaries in whose name they are established. These Professorships will enable the appointed Chairs to further their extraordinary achievements, provide academic leadership of teaching and research in medicine and nurture future generations of clinicians by being a role model and a mentor.

Said Duke-NUS Dean, Professor Thomas Coffman, “Many of the very successful activities the SingHealth Duke-NUS Academic Medical Centre has achieved so far may fall outside the bounds of typical grant support mechanisms. Therefore, funds raised from private philanthropy for medical
research and education will boost this trajectory of accomplishments, and help sustain support that can further strengthen, expand and fast track these programmes.”

“As we celebrate 10 years of partnership between SingHealth and Duke-NUS Graduate Medical School as an Academic Medical Centre, we are encouraged by the tremendous support from our partners - both individuals and corporations - who share the same vision and hope for a healthier tomorrow. This strengthens our resolve to accelerate research discoveries that translate into findings that enable us to better prevent, predict, diagnose, treat and halt disease progression. We hope to form more partnerships to achieve new possibilities and transform healthcare in the future,” said Professor Ivy Ng, Group Chief Executive Officer, SingHealth.

The philanthropic funds were raised over one and a half years, starting from April 2014, by healthcare institutions that are part of the SingHealth Duke-NUS Academic Medical Centre, including Singapore General Hospital, KK Women's and Children's Hospital, National Cancer Centre Singapore, National Heart Centre Singapore and Singapore National Eye Centre. These funds will supplement government funding to spark innovation, fuel research that translates promising successes in the laboratory into clinically meaningful improvements for patients and sharpen skills via training to set new benchmarks in improving care delivery. Annex A outlines some of the research projects that are underway.

The SingHealth Duke-NUS Gala Dinner will be a biennial event. The next fundraising Gala Dinner is expected to take place in 2017.

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ANNEX A

The funds raised from the SingHealth Duke-NUS Gala Dinner will go towards research and education projects across different clinical disciplines such as these:

A) ASCOLT Study

The ASCOLT Study is an international, collaborative, randomised phase 3 clinical trial to evaluate the benefit of low dose Aspirin in patients with Stage 2 and 3 colorectal cancer. Many observational studies over the past decade have strongly suggested a role for Aspirin in preventing colon cancer recurrence. The ASCOLT Study – conceived, designed and coordinated by Singapore – has been established to provide the evidence required to change cancer treatment guidelines.

Colorectal cancer is Singapore’s most common cancer and it is on rapid rise in Asia. If the Study is able to establish the efficacy of Aspirin, an off-patent drug that costs just one cent per tablet, in reducing colorectal deaths, the impact on affordability of treatment for one of the world’s most common cancer will be tremendous. It will change the way colon cancer is managed globally and lead to an enormous number of lives saved each year. This Study is the first of its kind and has been tipped as one of the most important cancer studies globally. It is led by a team of academic doctors from Singapore, United Kingdom and Australia, with trials involving more than 50 partnering hospitals in 11 countries.

B) PRIMO

In Singapore, 20% or about 8,000 women develop complications during the course of their pregnancy and childbirth due to premature delivery and reduced fetal growth. Even in developed countries, like Singapore, with advanced pre-natal care, these complications continue to occur because there are no reliable tests to determine in advance if a pregnant woman will develop any of these conditions that will allow doctors to take preventive measures. These complications can cause disease and even death in babies as well as increase their risk of developing cardiovascular and metabolic diseases during childhood and adulthood.

Pregnancy Research to Improve Mother and Child Outcomes (PRIMO) is a multi-pronged, longitudinal approach to enable the development of new therapeutic modalities to prevent or intervene in cases where complications arise. In the long term, pregnant women could be routinely screened as part of pre-natal care and stratified according to their risk for complications early in the pregnancy. PRIMO’s five strategies are:

- To characterise demographics, clinical data and risk factors for complications
- To evaluate new and innovative biochemical, biophysical and clinical screening modalities to identify cases early
• Develop clinical pathways, protocols and guidelines to optimise clinical management of complications and to monitor their effect on clinical outcome
• Systematic review of histopathological (microscopic examination of tissue) assessment of the placenta and association with adverse pregnancy outcomes
• Approach clinical problems from the perspective of a health services research

C) Rheumatology Research

Over 600,000 people in Singapore have a Rheumatological disease and there are more than 30 Rheumatological diseases, many of which are complex autoimmune conditions. These diseases can affect major organs including the joints, brain and nerves, heart and blood vessels, lungs, kidneys and skin, causing serious complications which can be life-threatening.

The five focus areas of Rheumatology research are: Systemic Lupus Erythematosus, Systemic Sclerosis, Rheumatoid Arthritis, Osteoarthritis and Spondyloarthritis. The research into these five conditions will:

• Look into the use of biomarkers to identify patients who are at risk of progressive disease and complications
• Determine the effectiveness of treatments and medications
• Improve treatment outcomes through applying advanced imaging techniques
• Study the impact and outcomes of flares on patients’ quality of lives
• Conduct clinical trials of new medications and treatment options.
About Singapore Health Services (SingHealth)
The SingHealth Duke-NUS Academic Medical Centre draws on the collective strengths of SingHealth and Duke-NUS Graduate Medical School to drive the transformation of healthcare and provide affordable, accessible and quality healthcare to patients. It is the largest public healthcare group in Singapore delivering comprehensive, multi-disciplinary care, with 42 clinical specialties, a network of 2 Hospitals, 5 National Specialty Centres, 9 Polyclinics and a Community Hospital. Sengkang Health, a new healthcare system to deliver patient-centric care to the community in the north-east of Singapore is currently developing Sengkang General and Community Hospitals which are slated for completion in 2018. For more information, please visit: www.singhealth.com.sg

Members of the SingHealth group:
Hospitals (Tertiary Specialty Care):
Singapore General Hospital, KK Women's and Children's Hospital, Sengkang Health

National Specialty Centres (Tertiary Specialty Care):
National Cancer Centre Singapore, National Dental Centre Singapore, National Heart Centre Singapore, National Neuroscience Institute, and Singapore National Eye Centre

SingHealth Polyclinics (Primary Care):
Bedok, Bukit Merah, Geylang, Marine Parade, Outram, Pasir Ris, Queenstown, Sengkang, and Tampines

Community Hospital (Intermediate and Long-term Care):
Bright Vision Hospital

About Duke-NUS Graduate Medical School Singapore

The Duke-NUS Graduate Medical School Singapore (Duke-NUS) was established in 2005 as a strategic collaboration between the Duke University School of Medicine, located in North Carolina, USA and the National University of Singapore (NUS). Duke-NUS offers a graduate entry, 4-year M.D. (Doctor of Medicine) training program based on the unique Duke model of education, with one year dedicated to independent study and research projects of a basic science or clinical nature. Duke-NUS also offers M.D/PhD and PhD programs. As a player in Singapore’s biomedical community, Duke-NUS has identified five Signature Research Programs: Cancer & Stem Cell Biology, Neuroscience and Behavioural Disorders, Emerging Infectious Diseases, Cardiovascular & Metabolic Disorders, and Health Services and Systems Research. Duke-NUS and SingHealth, Singapore’s largest public healthcare group, have established a strategic partnership in academic medicine. This initiative will guide and promote the future of medicine, tapping on and combining the collective strengths of SingHealth’s clinical expertise and Duke-NUS’ biomedical sciences research and medical education capabilities. For more information, please visit www.duke-nus.edu.sg