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Singapore tele-healthcare system gets top award

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Singapore leveraging on Patient Relationship Management



Singapore: Eastern Health Alliance, the regional health system for eastern Singapore, and IHiS is recognized with top Asia Pacific IT award, FutureGov 'Healthcare Organisation of the Year', for a telecare system where nurses use IT and the phone-to-care for chronic disease patients after they leave the hospital.

IHiS, an MOH subsidiary, architects and manages IT systems at all public healthcare institutions. EH Alliance recently expanded the telecare system to include patients with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and heart disease. The program has enabled its nurses to monitor over 2,600 diabetic patients since 2010. IHiS has also rolled out the system to National Heart Centre Singapore in August for patients who have undergone procedures for blocked heart arteries, and plans to implement it at more healthcare institutions.

The core of the system is a powerful patient relationship management (PRM) program that provides nurses with information to deliver proactive care for chronic disease patients after they leave the hospital. This includes data on the patients' medical condition, treatments, tests and clinic visits. The nurse telecarers from EH Alliance's health management unit (HMU) then communicate with the patients over the phone to guide them on the management of their medical condition and motivate them to keep to their prescribed treatments.

The system enables the nurses to intervene early if a patient's condition worsens, to lessen complications. It also reduces the common problem of patients' conditions deteriorating between their clinic visits, because they have not followed the treatment plan, or their declining conditions were not addressed in a timely manner.

It has also reduced patients' repeated A&E visits and hospital admissions, lowering costs for patients and the hospital. Mr TK Udairam, group CEO, EH Alliance, said that, "With the ageing population, we need to provide more support for chronic disease patients in the community. Treatment often requires multiple medication, diet and lifestyle changes, and knowing when to seek medical help. The PRM system helps our nurses care for more patients, more effectively, and focus them on

preventive care."

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