New polyclinic in Jurong lives up to its Pioneer name

Jose Hong

When Mrs Shenbagam Bala’s family members fell ill, they would usually visit Jurong Polyclinic about half an hour away, or visit a pricey private clinic nearby.

Not any more. Now, they can go to Pioneer Polyclinic, which opened on July 17.

Mrs Bala, 38, who lives in Block 63D, Jurong West Street 64 – about a 10-minute walk from the polyclinic – said: “We can now go and see the doctor almost immediately. It’s very convenient and cheap for us.”

The housewife is married to a 40-year-old biotechnologist, and they have a seven-year-old daughter.

The polyclinic, located in Jurong West Street 64, serves the more than 270,000 residents in the Jurong West area. Before this, Jurong Polyclinic in Jurong East was their nearest option.

In the first two weeks, the polyclinic has seen between 400 and 500 patients daily, but this number is expected to grow to 1,000 daily.

Pioneer Polyclinic – the first polyclinic to open in more than 10 years – boasts several pioneering features.

It is the first in Singapore to automate its pharmacy registration process, part of its drive to boost efficiency through harnessing technology.

It is also the first to pair all its patients with chronic diseases, like diabetes, with a dedicated care team whenever they visit the polyclinic, improving the care that patients with chronic diseases receive, said Dr David Tan, head of Pioneer Polyclinic.

The system is being rolled out in other polyclinics in Singapore.

Under this system, patients and their family members will be paired with one team that comprises two doctors, one nurse and one care coordinator.

The team will see that patient and their family members every time they visit the polyclinic to increase efficiency and build familiarity between patients and healthcare professionals, said Dr Tan.

The polyclinic now has three such teams, and each team will be assigned up to 6,000 patients.

In three years, the polyclinic hopes to ramp this up to five teams that will take care of as many as 20,000 patients with chronic conditions, Dr Lew Yi Jen, chief executive of National University Polyclinics said.

Pioneer Polyclinic also works closely with the community. For instance, it showcases the paintings of pupils from the neighbouring Jurong West Primary School, and its doctors have conducted health, diet and career talks for the pupils.

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The Pioneer Polyclinic pharmacy has a conveyor belt system that automatically delivers medicines to the counter. The polyclinic also pairs all its patients with chronic diseases with a dedicated care team. PHOTO: JONATHAN CHOO

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