

PRESS RELEASE

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For Immediate Publication

NEW NUS STUDY HIGHLIGHTS NEED FOR STRONGER SOCIAL CONNECTIONS, TRUST AND COHESION IN HOLISTIC APPROACH TO HEALTH

Pilot innovative care model at Health District @ Queenstown validates findings, and brings social and health support closer to residents in new shared community space



Photo credit: National University Health System (NUHS)

At the official opening of the Happy Village @ Mei Ling: (From left to right) Mdm Noraini Bte Jumadi, Queenstown resident; Ms Karen Wee, Executive Director, Lions Befrienders; Mr Tan Meng Dui, Co-Chair, Health District @ Queenstown Steering Committee, and Chief Executive Officer, HDB; Senior Parliamentary Secretary Mr Eric Chua; Senior Minister of State Mr Tan Kiat How; Mr Jalaludin S/O Peer Mohamed, Queenstown resident; Mr Siew Kum Chuen, Queenstown resident; Professor John Eu-Li Wong, Co-Chair, Health District @ Queenstown Steering Committee, Executive Director, NUS Centre for Population Health, and Senior Advisor, NUHS; Mr Chua Song Khim, Deputy Chief Executive, NUHS.

Health District @ Queenstown is co-led by:

Singapore, 15 March 2025 – Insights from a recent study by a team of researchers from the National University of Singapore's (NUS) Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences reinforce the need for a comprehensive, integrated approach to health.

Key findings of the **Baseline Study for Health District @ Queenstown** were announced today by Mr Tan Kiat How, Senior Minister of State for National Development & Digital Development and Information, at the opening of the Happy Village @ Mei Ling, a shared community space located at Block 160 Mei Ling Street as part of Health District @ Queenstown.

Led by Associate Professor Jia Lile, the multi-wave study engaged over 5,000 Queenstown residents aged 21 to 102 years old from September 2023 to May 2024 to gain a comprehensive understanding of Queenstown residents' well-being, health and health-related experiences. The Baseline Study revealed the following trends:

- 1. Overall health is influenced by various physical, mental and social well-being factors such as social connections, environment, productivity and engagement.** Integrated solutions in national health programmes which consider these various factors can enhance the health and well-being of respondents across their life stages, enabling them to lead more active and fulfilling lives.
- 2. Most respondents above 65 years old are mentally healthy but they can be more active socially and physically.** While mental health tends to improve as individuals get older, about two-thirds of the respondents above 65 years old do not actively participate in pursuits such as exercising, volunteering and learning.
- 3. Health challenges and age-related health issues can begin earlier than many may expect.** The Baseline Study found that 25 per cent of younger adults (aged between 21 and 34 years old) reported less than optimal health. Limited mobility and sensory impairment may also begin earlier than 50 years old.
- 4. Amongst those aged 36 years old and above, more than half have sufficient savings for short-term needs,** i.e. they have sufficient savings to sustain six or more months of expenses. **However, the study also showed that full-time employment starts to decline from 50 years old, which may indicate risks for future financial security.** Community initiatives to improve financial literacy and provide better employment support for mature workers could be explored.
- 5. 75 per cent of respondents enjoy strong social support from family and friends. 60 per cent said they trusted most people in the neighbourhood.** This highlights a strong foundation for social cohesion, which can be further reinforced through community-driven initiatives.

Please see Annex for more information on the Baseline Study.

These insights underscore the importance of a holistic approach to health, and are aligned with the objectives of Health District @ Queenstown. Efforts include the newly opened community engagement hub [Come4TeaLah!](#), which serves as a place of learning, interaction and co-creation; [FaithActs x Ibasho Margaret Drive Centre](#), to empower older residents to play a leading role in community change; and [Community Care Apartments at Queensway Canopy](#), which will provide on-site social activities and care services to facilitate ageing in place.

The opening of the Happy Village @ Mei Ling marks another key milestone for Health District @ Queenstown. The first-of-its-kind Blended Care team will provide holistic care from this newly opened community space.

An integrated model for the future

More than 300 guests and residents attended the opening of the Happy Village @ Mei Ling, which is designed to bring social and health support closer to residents.

The Happy Village @ Mei Ling is led by the National University Health System (NUHS), in collaboration with community partners including the Ministry of Social and Family Development, Agency for Integrated Care, the Health Promotion Board, People's Association, SportSG and Lions Befrienders. The new space is home to an innovative care model known as the Blended Care Team – the first in Singapore to bring together health and social care partners, as well as volunteers, to holistically take care of health and well-being needs within the community.

The efforts of the Blended Care Team include:

- Regular engagements for residents with their community health manager and local coordinator to build trusted relationships and encourage positive health behaviours, such as increasing physical activity levels and improving nutritional intake.
- Proactive and concerted outreach efforts with social care partners to reach residents who may benefit from additional health and social support, such as residents who have yet to engage in preventive health programmes or experience challenges in managing their healthcare appointments.
- Personalised, community-based embedded care to address care gaps and ensure residents remain well-supported by the care team and other residents.

Since early 2024, the Blended Care Team has been engaging residents in the area through the Mei Ling Resident Network centre. With the opening of the Happy Village @ Mei Ling, the Blended Care Team now has a dedicated space to better engage residents and carry out activities, which include:

- **Health consultations** with the Blended Care Team – residents can make appointments for health counselling and education, and management of their chronic disease.
- **Circuit exercises** – adapted from the VIVIFRAIL© programme (an internationally validated 12-week multi-component exercise programme for older adults to improve functional capacity and reduce their fall risks) by the NUHS geriatricians and physiotherapists for residents at Health District @ Queenstown. The adaptations include customising the use of common household items to encourage participants to continue these exercises at home.
- **A weekly walking group in collaboration with SportSG** – co-led by residents, the programme incorporates simple strength and balance exercises along the walks.
- **Weekly centre-based exercises** – targeted activities aimed at improving mobility, strength and flexibility for residents.

- **Monthly health talks and workshops** – held in conjunction with partners and members of the Blended Care Team, such as SportSG and allied health professionals, these sessions focus on wide-ranging topics including nutrition and disease prevention.

NUHS aims to expand the Blended Care Team model in the future to support even more residents, and scale up this initiative in collaboration with partners across the western region to bring care and support closer to where people live.

Professor John Eu-Li Wong, Co-Chair of the Steering Committee for the Health District @ Queenstown, highlighted the significance of integrating health and social care within the community: “By being in the midst of the community and reaching out to residents, NUHS hopes to better understand what is keeping them from age-appropriate screening, vaccinations; and for older residents, helping them with exercise, good nutrition, and preventing loneliness. This will complement and strengthen the healthcare system and help keep our communities cohesive and robust, especially as our population lives longer.”

“Health is not simply about treating illness. It is about enabling every person to lead a meaningful, active life in their own community. This requires a fundamental shift – from hospital-based treatment to community-driven, preventive health efforts that help people stay well for as long as possible,” he said. Prof Wong is also the Executive Director of the NUS Centre for Population Health and Senior Advisor of NUHS.

Chinese Glossary

National University Health System	国立大学医学组织
National University of Singapore	新加坡国立大学
Housing & Development Board	建屋发展局
Health District @ Queenstown	女皇镇保健区
Baseline Study for Health District @ Queenstown	女皇镇保健区基线研究
Happy Village @ Mei Ling	好友聚乐部 @ 美玲
Blended Care Team	社区联合支援团队
FaithActs x Ibasho Margaret Drive Centre	FaithActs x Ibasho 玛格烈通道中心
Professor John Eu-Li Wong <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-Chair, Health District @ Queenstown Steering Committee • Executive Director, NUS Centre for Population Health • Senior Advisor, National University Health System 	黄聿立教授 女皇镇保健区指导委员会联席主席 国大人口健康中心执行理事 国大医学组织资深顾问
Associate Professor Jia Lile Department of Psychology NUS Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences	贾里乐副教授 国大文学暨社会科学院心理学系
Professor Leonard Lee	李利伦教授 劳氏集团基金会公众风险理解研究所

Lloyd's Register Foundation Institute for the Public Understanding of Risk NUS Business School	国大商学院
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About Health District @ Queenstown

Health District @ Queenstown is a multi-stakeholder collaboration led by the National University Health System, National University of Singapore, and the Housing & Development Board, working closely with multiple partners from the public, private and people sectors. The Health District @ Queenstown aims to achieve four key goals: increase healthy longevity; enable purposeful longevity; promote intergenerational bonding; and empower residents to age in place.

In October 2021, Queenstown was designated as the pilot site for the development of a Health District, intended as a testing ground to trial integrated solutions that enhance the well-being of residents throughout their various life stages.

Annex

Baseline Study to understand well-being, health and health-related experiences of Queenstown residents

A team of researchers from the National University of Singapore's (NUS) Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, led by Associate Professor Jia Lile, conducted a Baseline Study using surveys, interviews and focus group discussions to gain a comprehensive understanding of Queenstown residents' well-being, health and health-related experiences. Findings from this study will help the team identify the needs of residents and enable the assessment of the overall impact of Health District @ Queenstown's initiatives in the future.

The team was also guided by Associate Professor Lim Yee Wei from the NUS Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine and Professor Leonard Lee from the Lloyd's Register Foundation Institute for the Public Understanding of Risk (IPUR) at NUS and NUS Business School.

A major part of the Baseline Study consists of a multi-wave survey. Phase 1 of the survey was conducted from September 2023 to May 2024, engaging over 5,000 Queenstown residents from all walks of life; for example, participants are aged between 21 to 102 years old, and staying in various types of housing. Residents responded to questions pertaining to diverse domains such as productivity, physical and psychological well-being, and social cohesion.

The key findings from Phase 1 of the Baseline Study survey are as follows:

- 1) **Overall health is influenced by various physical, mental and social well-being factors such as social connections, environment, productivity and engagement.** Integrated solutions in national health programmes which consider these various factors can enhance the health and well-being of respondents across their life stages, enabling them to lead more active and fulfilling lives.
- 2) **Most respondents above 65 years old are mentally healthy but they can be more active socially and physically.** While mental health tends to improve as individuals get older, about two-thirds of the respondents above 65 years old do not actively participate in pursuits such as exercising, volunteering and learning.

Initiatives such as the FaithActs x Ibasho Centre at Margaret Drive can enable older persons to stay meaningfully engaged through community-led interactions. In another project, students from NUS's Residential College 4 and Queenstown Secondary designed creative approaches such as food hunts, cooking, and mahjong sessions to encourage older persons in Queenstown and young people to bond. Additionally, construction for the pilot Active Heath Fitness Trail at Mei Ling has begun, and Build-To-Order developments in Queenstown are designed with wellness offerings to complement the existing amenities in Queenstown. A wellness hub comprising fitness equipment for circuit workouts will be built atop the multi-storey car park at Queen's Arc, while Queensway Canopy will have roof gardens integrated with a jogging track, fitness stations and mini obstacle courses to encourage residents to incorporate exercise into their daily routines.

- 3) **Health challenges and age-related health issues can begin earlier than many may expect.** The Baseline Study found that 25 per cent of younger adults (aged between 21 and 34 years old) reported less than optimal health. Limited mobility and sensory impairment may also begin earlier than 50 years old.

The National University Health System launched Health Together in May 2023, a community initiative alongside with its partners to support the health and wellness needs of residents in the western region of Singapore by empowering them to take ownership of their well-being and stay healthy. Residents who enrol into Health Together receive health and wellness tips, invitations to community events and health screenings based on their needs, as well as access to a range of resources such as useful directories, self-help tools, and the community programmes available around the neighbourhood. In addition, initiatives such as the Happy Village @ Mei Ling will provide social care and healthcare services to address older persons' social and physical health holistically.

- 4) **Amongst those aged 36 years old and above, more than half have sufficient savings for short-term needs**, i.e. they have sufficient savings to sustain six or more months of expenses. **However, the study also showed that full-time employment starts to decline from 50 years old, which may indicate risks for future financial security.** Community initiatives to improve financial literacy and provide better employment support for mature workers could be explored.
- 5) **75 per cent of respondents enjoy strong social support from family and friends. 60 per cent said they trusted most people in the neighbourhood.**

To further strengthen trust and cohesion within the community, residents could come together with stakeholders and researchers at community spaces such as the recently launched Come4TeaLah! community engagement hub to co-create solutions tailored to Queenstown's unique needs, learn about healthier lifestyles and interact with people of all ages. In addition, residents could gather with the Queenstown Kakis, a community of neighbours who hope to build kampung spirit with activities and food in a safe space for residents to interact. Every first and third Saturday of the month, from 9.30am till noon, the group meets to participate in a variety of arts and craft as well as gardening activities.

Elaborating on the significance of the findings, Assoc Prof Jia said, "The Baseline Study is a pulse-taking project that adopts a bottom-up approach to engage residents, allowing us to hear their voices and gain a deeper understanding of their current needs and future aspirations. The insights gathered will serve as the foundation for future programmes. To ensure ongoing engagement, we are forming a resident panel to continuously gather insights into their evolving needs. Through this platform, we aim to co-develop programmes that best address and serve these needs."

Phase 2 of the Baseline Study survey is currently underway and is targeted for completion by mid-2025. The researchers will be surveying the same group of respondents to monitor if there are changes to the earlier factors over time and they will also examine new factors such as financial literacy and caregiving.