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**S**INGAPORE Medical Specialists Centre (SMSC) believes the key to building a successful integrated healthcare centre is through investing in advanced medical facilities and equipment with medical professionals who are up to speed on the latest medical developments, coupled with an adaptive management and customer service team.

Positioning itself as a one-stop medical specialist centre, this notion paid off when it won the the Enterprise 50 (E50) Award in 2017.

Michelle Lim, chief operating officer of SMSC, says the award served as an encouragement to SMSC and recognition of their employees' commitment.

"The company can only be where it is today with everyone's effort and contribution, especially for those who have been with SMSC for many years. Essentially, this enables us to push ourselves to greater heights and spur the company's growth."

Located in the heart of Orchard Road, SMSC offers a wide range of medical services from cardiology, gastroscopy, ear, nose & throat, urology, general surgery to orthopaedics, ophthalmology and aesthetics.

#### Setting itself apart from stiff competition

With the guiding philosophy of "One Day, One Stop, One Centre", SMSC places a strong emphasis on providing holistic medical services whereby thorough and complete assessment and treatment can be done at one place and in one visit.

Aligning itself with Singapore's "Smart Nation" initiative, SMSC has constantly been adopting smart technology in its business to enhance the patient's experience.

One example is SMSC's acquisition of a 3-Tesla MRI machine in collaboration with Siemens Healthineers Asia, which gives them access to the cutting edge of diagnostic imaging technology.

Although it does not have any overseas locations, SMSC provides consultancy and advisory services to its partners overseas in areas such as equipment purchase and patient management systems.

For its foreign clients, Ms Lim says they also provide "a little more beyond just the medical treatment", providing a service where "the whole process starts even before the patient comes in."

"We have teams that can deal with medical reports in different languages. We can do additional services if needed, such as airport pick-up, medical evacuation where



Located in the heart of Orchard Road, Singapore Medical Specialists Centre offers a wide range of medical services. The firm gives a clear assignment of responsibilities between the management and the doctors, enabling doctors to focus on delivering treatments and ensuring the well-being of patients.

PHOTO: SMSC

# At the heart of healthcare

SMSC aims to help patients with better healthcare by staying up to speed with developments

we send planes out with a medical team on board to meet the patient."

With a high foreign client demographic, SMSC is also constantly adapting to the cultural differences of clients of various nationalities.

"The culture of each foreign patient is different," says Ms Lim. "We need to understand our patients' cultures in order to better serve their needs. How a Chinese patient thinks versus how a Vietnamese patient thinks is very different."

Hence, SMSC has also realised the importance of having a strong understanding of different cultures enabling them to customise services to better appeal to these clients.

#### Workplace culture

Many of SMSC's staff have been working for the centre for a long time, giving the firm a culture similar to that of one big family.

In SMSC, the management team members are not necessarily doctors or those with a medical or clinical background – an approach Ms Lim says "can help provide different perspectives." The firm gives a clear as-

signment of responsibilities between the management and the doctors, enabling doctors to focus on delivering treatments and ensuring the well-being of patients while the management is responsible for the non-clinical side of keeping the centre running.

The system works well for the centre as doctors in SMSC do not need to be worried about the financial side of the centre, thereby preventing conflict of interest.

SMSC also strongly emphasises the importance of continuous learning and upgrading as it empowers and encourages staff to develop their areas of specialisation.

"There are always conferences and training for the staff to understand what is new," says Ms Lim. "Our doctors will also attend conferences for each of their own specialities. Our doctors are quite at the forefront of their fields and they are able to equip themselves with the latest treatment techniques that are available on the market."

Besides that, the centre also provides job rotation for non-medically trained newcomers in their first

few months of employment so that they have a broader understanding of the functions in the centre.

"Our staff will not be able to deliver good services if they don't understand the centre. Hence, initial training is very essential for our staff and the centre in ensuring that good services can be delivered to our patients."

Being in a services industry, their staff serve as the first line of communications with patients so having knowledgeable and passionate staff will translate to a better patient experience.

As the motto of the centre is to serve patients with a heart, SMSC also offers medical services and knowledge to the wider community. Some notable activities that the centre carried out over the past years include giving health talks and free assessment.

For instance, in 2017, the centre conducted a sharing on how to prevent gastric and colon cancer at insurance provider Aviva and health talks for Hotel Jen and Metro staff. One major project that SMSC took part in was the collaboration with

Health Promotion Board and Orchard Road Business Association, providing screening services on Orchard Road.

In the past few years, SMSC had made a conscious effort to boost its presence in other markets such as China, Malaysia, Cambodia and Vietnam.

"We will still continue to explore more of the regional projects and hence we will probably look for some overseas expansions but they will be in line with our group's vision."

Nevertheless, Ms Lim thinks that "eventually, it is not ideal from a business perspective to be too foreigner-centric as we will be largely affected by the volatility of the external markets if we are too focused on them".

Moving forward, SMSC will find its balance in both foreign and domestic markets while sharpening its technology and skills to better understand the changing demands and trends in the region.

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The article was written by students from NUS Business School.