

More avenues for nurses to upgrade skills

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There will soon be more avenues for nurses here to upgrade their skills and knowledge.

A part-time nursing degree and a course in medication administration were announced by Health Minister Gan Kim Yong at the Nurses' Merit Award ceremony yesterday.

He said the nursing workforce here had grown by 17 per cent since 2013 to around 42,000 nurses last year. Nursing intakes have also risen from more than 1,600 in 2013 to more than 2,100 last year.

"We will grow our nursing workforce in a few ways: by creating more opportunities for you to upgrade yourselves in emerging skills and competencies, encouraging professional development throughout your nursing careers, and making nursing a career of choice for both students as well as mid-career professionals," said Mr Gan.

The Bachelor of Science (Nursing Practice) is offered by the National University of Singapore's Alice Lee Centre for Nursing Studies, in a first for a local university.

The three-year part-time degree starts next month. It is for registered nurses who have at least one year of work experience and a nursing diploma from Nanyang Polytechnic



Ms Stella Goh, a senior nurse clinician who practises palliative care at the National Cancer Centre Singapore, and Mr Albert Ho, a nurse manager at the National University Hospital, were among the 101 nurses honoured at yesterday's Nurses' Merit Award ceremony for their contributions to the profession. ST PHOTO: GIN TAY

or Ngee Ann Polytechnic.

The Certification of Competency in Administration of Medication will equip nurses with pharmacological knowledge to administer prescribed medication to patients, while being supervised by a registered nurse.

The course covers topics such as medication administration management and technologies. It is for nurses with at least two years' work experience, who are enrolled with the Singapore Nursing Board and have valid practising certificates.

The first batch of 19 nurses was enrolled in the 120-hour course, run by the Institute of Technical Education College East, last Thursday.

At the awards ceremony, held at Concorde Hotel Singapore, 101 nurses were honoured for their contributions to the profession.

One recipient was senior nurse clinician Stella Goh, 44, who practises palliative care at the National Cancer Centre Singapore.

Her job involves caring for patients near death, but she also volun-

teers with other patient support groups.

"Hopefully, I'm able to help them (patients' families) pull through this hard journey and they're able to live on and carry the patient's legacy with them," said Ms Goh.

Another recipient was Mr Albert Ho, 59, whose 34-year career has spanned milestones such as the set-up of the National University Hospital's operating theatre.

"I feel great that they have recognised what I've done all these

years," said the nurse manager, who also planned a smart inventory management system that helped the hospital save up to \$100,000.

The nurses were nominated for the award, which started in 1976, by their healthcare institutions and chosen by a panel set up by the Ministry of Health. Each recipient was given a medal to be worn with their uniform, and \$1,000 cash for training and development.

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