

# New institute to address global health challenges

---

**Linette Lai**

---

---

A new institute to tackle health issues such as the spread of infectious diseases was launched yesterday.

The SingHealth Duke-NUS Global Health Institute will foster collaboration with governments and scientists overseas in areas such as research, policy development and education. It is hoped that the partnership can help better insulate countries from global pandemics, and increase opportunities for joint research studies across countries.

“Solutions to health challenges do not always come from our own backyard,” said Professor Ivy Ng, group chief executive of SingHealth.

“By working with regional collaborators, our healthcare professionals will gain valuable insights to hone their clinical skills and research expertise to address emerging health challenges and disease threats.”

The institute was launched by Foreign Minister Vivian Balakrishnan at the SingHealth Duke-NUS Scientific Congress, held at the Academia building in Outram.

The institute will be helmed by Professor Michael Merson, former vice-provost for global affairs at Duke University and founder of the university’s Duke Global Health Institute. He has served in advisory roles for the World Health Organisation and the World Bank.

“One area of research where we will continue to work is in emerging infectious diseases,” Prof Merson said. The institute will also ramp up the study of non-communicable diseases in the region.

At yesterday’s conference, private healthcare group Parkway Pantai donated \$2 million to the SingHealth Duke-NUS Academic Medical Centre to establish a new scholarship for medical students. Money from the Mount Elizabeth-Gleneagles Graduate Scholarship Fund will be given to needy Duke-NUS medical students.

It will also fund talent development awards, which will allow students from all three local medical schools to present the results of outstanding projects at global conferences.

---

[linettel@sph.com.sg](mailto:linettel@sph.com.sg)