

Mr Lew Chee Beng, founder and chairman of charity Lew Foundation, at the National Kidney Foundation's oldest dialysis centre in Clementi yesterday. The charity donated \$2 million for the refurbishment of the centre, which now has a more open and spacious look, with no partitions between dialysis stations, allowing patients to interact with one another while undergoing treatment. ST PHOTO: CHONG JUN LIANG



Weather

SINGAPORE

24/33°C

SHOWERS



Over southern and western Singapore in the afternoon.

OUTLOOK

Tuesday: Fair and warm.

Wednesday: Fair and warm.

AIR QUALITY

PSI 28-54 (Moderate)
24-hour reading as of 7pm yesterday

More capacity at NKF's oldest dialysis centre after \$2m facelift

Timothy Goh

The National Kidney Foundation's (NKF) oldest dialysis centre in the west of Singapore has a new look, thanks to a \$2 million donation from local charity Lew Foundation.

Located at Block 326 Clementi Avenue 5, the refurbished centre now has 30 dialysis stations, up from 20 previously, allowing it to serve up to 180 patients a week.

The redesigned layout of the centre – which was set up in 1990 – has done away with the patient cubicles of the past.

Instead, the centre now has a more open and spacious look, with no partitions between dialysis stations, allowing patients to interact with one another while undergoing treatment.

Speaking to The Straits Times yesterday, clinical nurse manager Vinothan Umarani said: "At one glance, I can view all the patients, identify any issues and attend to them immediately."

All of the centre's equipment is also brand new and fully digitalised. Its storage facilities have been expanded as well.

Thanking Lew Foundation for its donation at the opening cere-

mony of the centre yesterday, NKF chairman Arthur Lang said: "The upgrading works allow for effective space usage and enhanced patient flow."

"This translates to better coordination of care, patient safety and patient satisfaction."

Mr Yeo Puay Hin, executive director of Lew Foundation, said: "Through our partnership with NKF, which has been providing affordable and quality renal care for more than 50 years, we hope to support kidney patients in their treatment and, in turn, improve their quality of life."

Mr Lang highlighted the need for

NKF to strengthen upstream measures, including kidney disease prevention and early intervention.

Simply building dialysis centres will not be sufficient to cope with the growing number of kidney patients and Singapore's ageing population, he said.

The Republic currently has about 8,000 patients on dialysis, of whom about two-thirds are under NKF's care.

An average of 855 new dialysis patients were admitted to NKF every year for the past five years. It spent about \$116 million to treat kidney failure in FY2019/2020.

NKF said dialysis treatment costs about \$25,000 a patient each year before subsidies, and that kidney disease usually comes with other medical costs and opportunity costs, such as when patients are unable to work.

Noting that Thursday is World Kidney Day, Mr Lang said: "Beating this disease is a collective effort. The best way to fight kidney

disease is for all of us to take charge of our health and spread the awareness by informing our loved ones."

Dr Tan Wu Meng, an MP for Jurong GRC, who was guest of honour at the opening ceremony yesterday, said it is important to help families get better access to healthier food and encourage children to adopt healthy diets and eating habits from a young age.

"It's also about improving health education so that families who may not be so well informed can help look after themselves better, thereby reducing the risk of chronic diseases," said Dr Tan, who is also chairman of the Government Parliamentary Committee for Health.

Mr Lang urged Singaporeans to go for regular health screenings, cut down on salt, oil and sugar in their diets, and exercise regularly.

"Let us sacrifice now for our good choices, (rather) than pay the heavy price down the road."

tingoh@sph.com.sg