



# SCH Patient Experience Associates: Job Redesigning for better Patient Experience

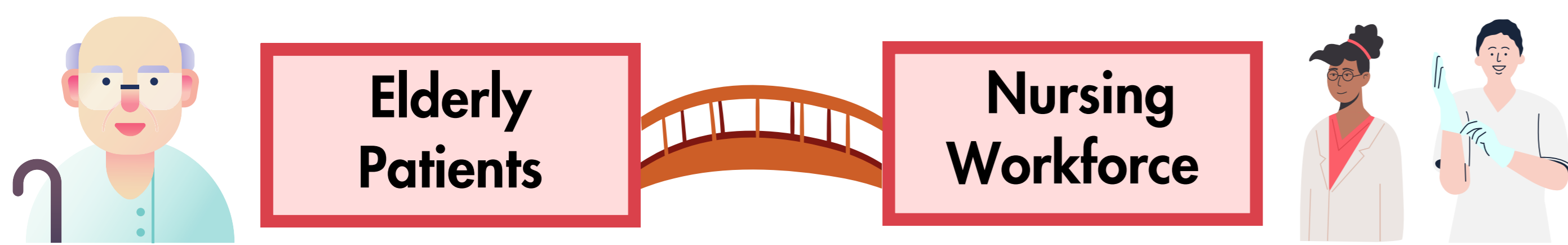
Singapore Healthcare Management 2023

Stephanie Yeap, Jasmine Pek, Junaidah Hameed, Tee Yong Ming, Yip Shu Min, Jessie Zhao, Toh Poh Leng, Magdalene Yeow, Ong Leng San, Tan Yan Ting, Lim Jay Hui



## 1) Introduction

Majority of SingHealth Community Hospital's (SCH) patients are elderly who do not speak English. Most of our nursing workforce have insufficient language proficiency to communicate effectively with our patients, which may affect the overall patient experience. As such, we are driven to bridge communication between patients and the care team, under the backdrop of higher expectations by our patients and caregivers and a need to build a local workforce and mitigate manpower risk.



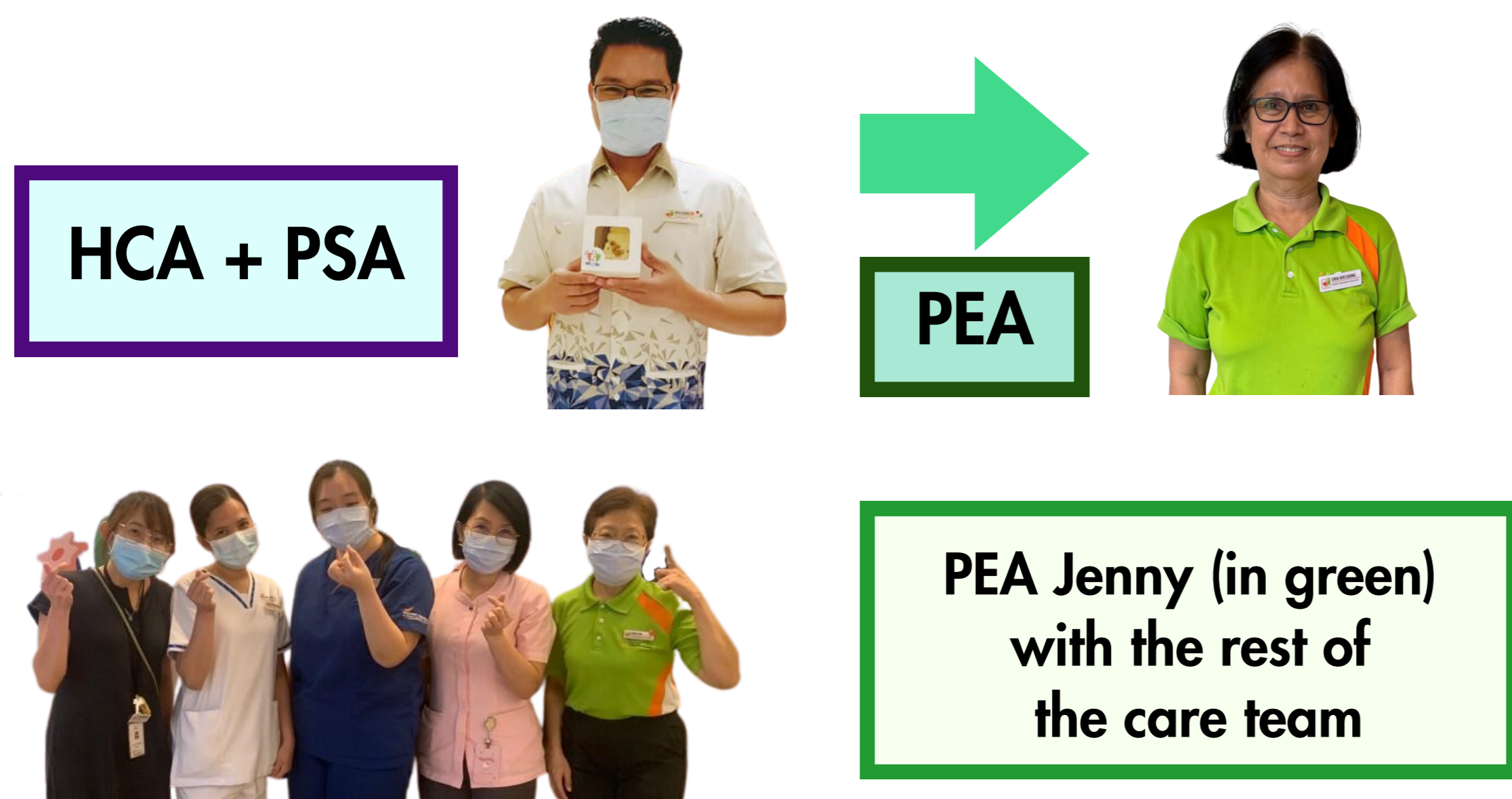
Singapore Airlines (SIA) cabin crew during their deployment as Patient Service Ambassadors (PSAs)



Inspired by the deployment of Singapore Airlines (SIA) cabin crew as Patient Service Ambassadors (PSAs) at SCH wards during the COVID-19 pandemic, SCH created the role of Patient Experience Associate (PEA). The role combines the functions of Healthcare Assistants (HCAs) and PSAs. This creates a more sustainable workforce by appealing to the local talent market and promoting a better employee and patient experience.

## 2) Methodology

Before embarking on the job redesign, the team did a thorough analysis of the duties and responsibilities of the HCAs and PSAs, as well as the needs of the organisation, patients, and caregivers. The HCAs provide basic nursing care support to patients while the PSAs establish positive rapport with the patients and caregivers through active engagement, and act as a liaison between patients and the healthcare team. The team identified an opportunity to integrate the two roles into a new enlarged role, in the form of PEAs. The PEAs assist the care team in performing basic caregiving activities, including psycho-social care, and engagement of patients to ensure their comfort and safety under the supervision of trained nurses.



Their responsibilities include:



Patient Services (Eg. Orientation and Daily Assistance)

Patient Care (Eg. Transfers, Oral Hygiene, Toileting and Feeding)

Patient Engagement (Eg. Translation, Recreational Activities, and Patient Surveys)



Portering

The target hiring group is Singaporeans and Permanent Residents with at least GCE N/O/A Level qualifications. To make the shift hours more appealing to locals, PEAs are required to cover two rotating shifts: AM (7am to 3/4pm) and PM (12pm/1pm to 9pm). Additionally, SCH offers part-time work arrangements for locals who are unable to commit to full-time employment. Our team also developed a tailored 5-day in-house foundation training for all new PEAs. This training provides a structured, competency-based orientation programme with integrated on-the-job training. Its purpose is to ensure a smooth transition for the new staff and build their confidence and competency in their roles.

## 3) Results

The team successfully converted five existing staff to take up the role of PEAs in Sengkang Community Hospital (SKCH) and recruited more than 13 new staff to fill this role across SCH in both SKCH and Outram Community Hospital (OCH).

Patients' Compliments: Hatta is very patient and caring. He stood out as someone who responds quickly to requests. Angeline is courteous and meets expectations. She is very detailed and knows what the patient needs.

Jenny Tan SKCH PEA: I am appreciative of the opportunity to be converted to be a PEA as it allows me to work closely with patients and caregivers. It brings me great satisfaction when my patients recover and thank me for the care provided.

Caregiver's Compliment: Wendy is friendly and helpful. She offers to help trim hair for my mother. She is also very thoughtful to seek my consent before volunteering her service. I also notice her friendliness towards other patients. Her love for patients is commendable.

Our patients and caregivers have expressed their appreciation for the presence of the PEAs and has commended their efforts in numerous compliments to the Nurses and Patient Experience team. Our PEAs received more than 50 compliments in 6 months. The PEAs also reported higher job satisfaction with the new role.

Patient's Compliment: Your ladies in green, Jenny, Fanny and Sally are absolutely fantastic. Always smiley, friendly and helpful.

## 4) Conclusion

With the evolving healthcare landscape, SCH needs to constantly adapt to the changing needs of our patients and caregivers. The new PEA role effectively combined the functions of the HCAs and PSAs to improve patient care, enhance patient experience and create a more positive work environment by providing personalised care and assistance to patients and caregivers. It also provides another career choice for locals who are interested in the healthcare industry.