



Three of the 125 nurses who received the Nurses' Merit Award yesterday. From left: Senior staff nurse Joel Quek from the National Centre for Infectious Diseases, principal nurse Sreevidya Jayacopalan from Khoo Teck Puat Hospital and advanced practice nurse Lim Tien Joo from the Institute of Mental Health. ST PHOTO: ARIFFIN JAMAR

Ong: S'pore riding Covid-19 wave without heightened measures

Remember the burden of healthcare workers as the rest go about their lives normally, he says

Clara Chong

For the first time, Singapore will be going through a wave of Covid-19 infections without heightened measures.

This means healthcare workers have primarily shouldered the burden, Health Minister Ong Ye Kung said yesterday as he recognised and thanked the efforts of nurses at the Nurses' Merit Award event held at Suntec.

"The only thing that we have implemented is for you to wear your masks indoors... We are still vaccinating but our coverage is already very high," said Mr Ong.

He stressed that this current wave is an important juncture in Singapore's journey towards living with Covid-19.

"In this Omicron wave, by and large, the burden falls on our hospitals, nurses and our medical personnel. I hope we all remember

who is carrying that burden as the rest of Singapore go about their lives normally," Mr Ong said.

"I believe there are good reasons, looking at the numbers, that the trajectory of the wave has almost peaked or is at its peak. I really hope from here, things will get better," he added.

In his speech, Mr Ong noted the sacrifices nurses have made.

In 2020, as Covid-19 cases surged in the community, nurses were an integral part of the effort to increase isolation and intensive care beds in hospitals, and setting up community care facilities for patients with milder symptoms.

"You are the ones who kept these critical facilities running," Mr Ong said.

Then when vaccines became available in 2021 and Singapore started its National Vaccination Programme, nurses helped run the vaccination centres, administer vaccines to millions of people, put at ease those who were nervous

about the injections, and take care of those who felt unwell afterwards.

Said Mr Ong: "Today, over 93 per cent of our total population is fully vaccinated, and 78 per cent and counting have received their first boosters."

"Singapore has recorded one of the highest vaccine coverage rates in the world. It makes a huge difference in preventing infected individuals from developing severe complications from Covid-19 infections."

During the Omicron wave this year, it was again nurses who took on the high surge in patient load.

"Our nursing students played a key role too. We were desperate for nursing manpower, and so worked with Nanyang Polytechnic and Ngee Ann Polytechnic to mobilise our nursing students," said Mr Ong.

"Nurses also bring something else that may not be so easily discernible, much less measured. Yet it is essential and irreplaceable – and that is human compassion," he added.

"Not everyone can be a shoulder to cry on when a loved one is in dis-

stress or lost. Not everyone can bring peace to a patient or loved one in time of anxiety.

"Not everyone can make a patient smile even at his lowest moments, or look into the future with optimism as he regains his strength."

"In a crisis as isolating as Covid-19, the human compassion of nurses is empowering, comforting and invaluable."

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Exceptional performance at work – 125 receive Nurses' Merit Award

Chong Xin Wei

Principal nurse Sreevidya Jayacopalan often clocks nine hours of shift work a day, and returns home to her young children who would be asleep by then.

But in 2020, she did not hesitate to volunteer and join a medical team which worked at a migrant workers' facility.

Decked in full personal protective equipment in the sweltering heat, the 37-year-old had to be on stand-by to perform swab tests as a wave of infections swept through the dormitories.

Yesterday, Ms Sreevidya was among 125 nurses who were presented with the Nurses' Merit Award by Health Minister Ong Ye Kung.

The award is given to nurses who display noteworthy and exceptional performance, participate in professional development, and contribute to raising the nursing profession.

Winners were given a medal to be worn as part of the nurse's uniform and \$1,000 in cash.

Ms Sreevidya, who works in the Care For Acute Mentally Infirm Elders ward at Khoo Teck Puat Hospital, looks after elderly patients with dementia.

When visitors were not allowed into the hospital, she set up video-conferencing sessions for the families and patients, including those who felt insecure and lonely.

When some foreign nurses returned home and others were infected by Covid-19, the ward often had only two nursing staff to handle about 11 patients.

Advanced practice nurse Lim

Tien Joo, 45, was also among those who received the award.

Mr Lim, who works at the Institute of Mental Health (IMH), had to manage patients who were not allowed to leave their wards amid the pandemic.

To introduce patients to technology and other activities during Covid-19, Mr Lim used a video-conferencing platform to let patients from different wards interact with one another.

Mr Lim, who has been with IMH for 22 years, said: "Despite all the challenges, every nurse continues to care for the patients to their best ability."

Senior staff nurse Joel Quek, 32, had to put on hold his advanced diploma studies in nursing for critical care and return to the front line when Covid-19 hit in 2020.

Working in the intensive care unit at the National Centre for Infectious Diseases, Mr Quek looked after Covid-19 patients.

To avoid putting his friends and family at risk, the 32-year-old limited his interactions with them.

"This imposed a sense of loneliness. But ultimately it was for the greater good," he said.

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Poll: Customer satisfaction dips in retail sector

Amanda Lee
Correspondent

Takashimaya department store, supermarket chain Sheng Siong as well as fashion labels Uniqlo and Zalora have received the thumbs up from consumers, but a study shows that customer satisfaction in the retail sector has declined.

These findings, released yesterday, come from an annual study by the Institute of Service Excellence at Singapore Management University.

Customer satisfaction in the retail sector – which comprises department stores, fashion apparel, supermarkets and e-commerce – fell by 1.5 per cent compared with last year, scoring 71.3 points out of a possible 100.

The other sector that was tracked – infocommunications – saw satisfaction improving by 1.9 per cent, with 69.8 points, reversing two years of decline.

The study involved face-to-face and online interviews, with 4,800 local consumers polled between January and April this year. The findings come a day after the Department of Statistics revealed that retail sales surged 17.8 per cent year on year in May, extending a 12.1 per cent growth in April.

The department store sub-sector scored 70.9 points (a 2.4 per cent dip year on year), while the fashion apparel one logged 72.1 points (a decline of 1.7 per cent).

Takashimaya headed the department store sub-sector with 76.3 points. Uniqlo, which topped the fashion apparel sub-sector, had 75.9 points.

The supermarket sub-sector's 71.4 points marked a decline of 0.8 per cent, while the e-commerce sub-sector had 70.8 points (down by 0.5 per cent).

Sheng Siong, which topped the supermarket sub-sector, scored 75 per cent, while Zalora, which headed the e-commerce sub-sector, had 75.1 points.

Customers of department stores and fashion apparel outlets had lower levels of loyalty – defined as the likelihood of repurchasing from the store or brand, and tolerance to price changes – with scores falling by 4 per cent and 3.5 per cent, respectively.

The study saw cashless payment usage surge from 44.8 per cent in 2018 to 82.9 per cent this year.

In the infocomm sector, the mobile telecommunications sub-sector logged 70 points (a 1.2 per cent rise), while the broadband sub-sector's 68.3 points represented a 2.2 per cent increase.

StarHub topped the mobile telecoms sub-sector with 70.8 points (a 0.8 per cent increase) and pay TV sub-sector with 70.7 points. Singtel headed the broadband sub-sector with 68.8 points (a 3.5 per cent increase), while new inclusion Disney+ topped the video streaming services sub-sector with 76.3 points.

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STAGE PROGRAMME

TIME	5 JULY 2022 (Tuesday)	6 JULY 2022 (Wednesday)	7 JULY 2022 (Thursday)
12.00pm to 1.00pm	The Role of Reducing Electrons in Beauty & Health by Natural Produce	Achieving Good Sleep & Autonomic Balance by Natural Produce	The Role of Reducing Electrons in Beauty & Health by Natural Produce
1.00pm to 2.00pm	Secrets to Light Up Your Face by BECOS	Secret of Natural Beauty! Reveal Traditional TCM Face Meridian & Detoxification by SOQ International Academy Pte Ltd	Secrets to Light Up Your Face by BECOS
2.00pm to 3.00pm	Wake Up Call with Live Demo by Legendary Jenny Wong, Principal of Top To Toe Beauty College since 1981 from World Masters' Wakeful Mentors on Ways & Will to Beautiful Heads, Hearts, Hands, Hips & Heels by Top To Toe College Of Beauty Therapy & Cosmetology Pte Ltd	Wake Up Call with Live Demo by Legendary Jenny Wong, Principal of Top To Toe Beauty College since 1981 from World Masters' Wakeful Mentors on Ways & Will to Beautiful Heads, Hearts, Hands, Hips & Heels by Top To Toe College Of Beauty Therapy & Cosmetology Pte Ltd	Wake Up Call with Live Demo by Legendary Jenny Wong, Principal of Top To Toe Beauty College since 1981 from World Masters' Wakeful Mentors on Ways & Will to Beautiful Heads, Hearts, Hands, Hips & Heels by Top To Toe College Of Beauty Therapy & Cosmetology Pte Ltd
3.00pm to 4.00pm	20x ROI with New Semi-Permanent Aesthetic Market by SOQ International Academy Pte Ltd	Experience Aesthetic/Clinical Grade Skin Care at Home with Hollywood Cosmetics by Whitetree Health and Beauty Pte Ltd	The Latest Non-Surgical Face Lifting for Natural V-Shaped Face by SOQ International Academy Pte Ltd
4.00pm to 5.00pm			

WORKSHOP PROGRAMME

TIME	5 JULY 2022 (Tuesday)	6 JULY 2022 (Wednesday)	7 JULY 2022 (Thursday)
11.30am to 12.30pm	Anti-Redness Skin Recovery Treatment by Norel Dr. Wilzt	New Revolution of Radio Frequency Treatment by Absolute MS (S) Pte Ltd	No-Age Youth-Enhancing Collagen Veil Treatment by BECOS
12.30pm to 1.30pm	Wake Up Call with Live Demo by Legendary Jenny Wong, Principal of Top To Toe Beauty College since 1981 from World Masters' Wakeful Mentors on Ways & Will to Beautiful Heads, Hearts, Hands, Hips & Heels by Top To Toe College Of Beauty Therapy & Cosmetology Pte Ltd	Wake Up Call with Live Demo by Legendary Jenny Wong, Principal of Top To Toe Beauty College since 1981 from World Masters' Wakeful Mentors on Ways & Will to Beautiful Heads, Hearts, Hands, Hips & Heels by Top To Toe College Of Beauty Therapy & Cosmetology Pte Ltd	Wake Up Call with Live Demo by Legendary Jenny Wong, Principal of Top To Toe Beauty College since 1981 from World Masters' Wakeful Mentors on Ways & Will to Beautiful Heads, Hearts, Hands, Hips & Heels by Top To Toe College Of Beauty Therapy & Cosmetology Pte Ltd
1.30pm to 2.30pm	Go Digital with Beauty Salon Cloud CRM by Sequoia Pte Ltd	Go Digital with Beauty Salon Cloud CRM by Sequoia Pte Ltd	Go Digital with Beauty Salon Cloud CRM by Sequoia Pte Ltd
2.30pm to 3.30pm	The Body Type Blueprint – What's Yours? by Laboratoire Sirtyl Singapore Pte Ltd	Nanomised Cosmeceutical for Hair Fall Repair Solution by NXG Global International Pte. Ltd.	Nanomised Cosmeceutical for Hair Fall Repair Solution by NXG Global International Pte. Ltd.
3.30pm to 4.30pm			
4.30pm to 5.30pm			

Visitors are advised to pre-register at our website www.beautyasia.com.sg. Only Fully Vaccinated participants / visitors may enter the exhibition. TraceTogether (TT) App or Token is required to facilitate eligibility checks for entry to the exhibition.

Important Note: • The Exhibition is strictly open only to trade, professionals and business visitors from the beauty and wellness industry by invitation and business card registration only. • For safety reasons, children below the age of 16 will not be allowed to enter the exhibition hall at any time. • All visitors must be suitably attired as this is a professional trade exhibition. • The organiser reserves the right to refuse admission to any person or remove any person from the exhibition hall without giving any reason.

Incorporating: **Spa Asia 2022**, **Health & Asia 2022**, **Natural Asia 2022**

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