



Speed of diagnosis and treatment is a philosophy of care we believe in, and therefore invest in to provide excellent standard of care.



**Phua Tien Beng**  
CEO  
Mount Elizabeth  
Hospital

# Mount Elizabeth Hospital's CEO takes medical appointment to WhatsApp

CEO Phua Tien Beng is dead serious on patient-centred care as it now uses WhatsApp to book appointments from anywhere in the world and to let patients easily reach them.

Mount Elizabeth Hospital, colloquially called MountE, has been catering to patients in the region for over 30 years. The 345-bed private hospital has earned its title of being a multi-organ transplant specialty hospital over the years as it is the first private hospital in Singapore to perform open heart surgery and establish a nuclear medicine centre. *Healthcare Asia* sat down and talked with CEO Phua Tien Beng on MountE's future with him as the leader.

## What are the latest innovations, developments, and strategies to improve the quality of service of Mount Elizabeth Hospital?

Every patient's safety is of utmost importance to us. One of our latest initiatives, amongst others, is the Knowledge Based Medication Administration system, implemented last year. Nurses now electronically scan the wrist tag on each patient's arm before administering any medication. The system immediately alerts the nurse when there is a mismatch in medication and patient. We are also working on remotely monitoring the vital signs of patients. This reduces the need for nurses to physically go to the patient to take readings, thus minimising the need to disturb them, especially in the night. Patients will be able to get uninterrupted sleep and can recover better; nurses are also able to focus on other areas of patient care.

In June 2015, we piloted a bed management system to speed up the admissions process. Previously, the only way the admissions office would know if there are available beds is for them to call the ward and have the nurses walk through to check. With this new system, the status of all beds in the wards; whether they are occupied, being cleaned, etc., can be tracked in real time. Admissions waiting time has been reduced by 26%, which is about 40 minutes.

## What are some of the problems and challenges facing Mount Elizabeth Hospital and how do you plan to address them?

Being in Singapore's prime location also means that there is limited physical room for the hospital to grow and expand. In recent years, we are seeing a greater demand for single bed rooms, due to more patients placing more importance on comfort and privacy. Whilst I would like to cater to this preference, the hospital is restrained by space. Because of this, there is a limit to the number of patients the hospital can house in future. It is therefore important that we continue to find ways to innovate and increase productivity. We are working on a unique concept of flexi-rooms, where we are able to convert double bed rooms into single rooms, vice versa. This is probably a first for an acute hospital.

We have also recently expanded beyond the hospital's physical boundaries by moving our outpatient Mount Elizabeth Rehabilitation Centre to neighbouring Paragon Medical Centre. Occupying an area of more than 3,100 sq ft, it is the largest and most comprehensive private rehabilitation centre in Singapore. We are also starting to invest in and build up our digital capabilities. With the rise of a digital economy, we need to start looking at how to approach healthcare with a preventive approach; to make healthcare more convenient, and delivered where most needed. Remote monitoring via devices that send results to the doctor's office, for example, can largely alleviate the strain on our healthcare system.

On this note, Mount Elizabeth Hospital has recently launch Health Plus – a health and wellness web resource with up-to-date healthcare information backed by accredited specialists. Also, riding on the popularity and convenience of WhatsApp, the public can now also touch base with us, including making medical appointments, via this platform, from anywhere in the world.

## What are some of your future plans for Mount Elizabeth Hospital for the next two to three years?

Moving forward, we have three areas of focus for the hospital. First is to make ourselves more patient-centric; to make it as convenient and seamless as possible for patients. Second is to continue to provide better clinical outcomes by attracting the best medical talents and staying ahead with cutting-edge treatments. Third is to continue to leverage on technological advancements and innovations. We were the first private healthcare player in Singapore to embark on Electronic Medical Records in 2011 and we will use it, moving forward, to enable our doctors and nurses to monitor, connect, and make clinical decisions using their mobile devices on the go.

Many medical tourists come to Singapore, Mount Elizabeth Hospital in particular, to receive high-quality treatment. Our key value proposition is that we are able to provide a comprehensive list of treatment options that are tailored to each patient. Our large pool of highly qualified specialists and healthcare professionals, coupled with a reputation of being a trusted medical provider with a strong track record spanning almost 40 years, means that we are able to give well-rounded diagnoses to patients. The Mount Elizabeth brand will continue to put the hospital at the forefront of medical tourism. The biggest strength of Mount Elizabeth Hospital is the pool of doctors that we have, with over 1,400 accredited specialists in diverse disciplines and more than 500 of them running clinics at the hospital, this concentration of specialists under one roof is unparalleled in Asia.