

## RafflesMed launches S\$4 million centre in Orchard Road

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### Singapore

TO cater to a heavier patient load, integrated private healthcare provider Raffles Medical Group (RMG) has launched a new S\$4 million multi-disciplinary medical centre in Orchard Road to serve local patients and medical tourists in the area.

The group said its patient load has risen by about 10 per cent yearly in the past two to three years.

Currently, more than a third of the patients at the group's flagship hospital in Bugis are foreigners.

Prem Kumar Nair, managing director of Singapore healthcare at RMG, said he anticipates the new medical centre at Shaw Centre to treat a higher foreign patient load. While Dr Nair admitted that the number of medical tourists, particularly those from Indonesia, has fallen, he noted that patients from Vietnam and Russia, among other nationalities, make up for the loss.

The new outpatient centre, spanning 17,000 square feet (1,580 square metres) over two floors, offers traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) services such as acupuncture and cupping, as well as a full spectrum of speciality services including cardiology and obstetrics.

This is the first time the group has incorporated TCM outside its main clinic located in the hospital, as demand for TCM services has grown by 10 per cent between last May and this May. The healthcare group had started offering TCM services in 2005.

Dr Nair said the new medical centre "will certainly add to topline and bottomline". He said: "We are seeing more patients and then we are sending more patients to the hospital. And don't forget that for the hospital, some costs are already fixed, so we are actually bringing in more patients to spread over the fixed costs such as cost of nurses and operating theatres and intensive care unit."

Of late, concerns were raised by other Shaw Centre tenants on how the revamped mall has failed to draw in the crowd, but the group is not too bothered by this. After all, the health-care business is slightly different from consumer businesses such as food and beverage and retail shops, said Dr Nair.

Led by a team of 30, the new centre can serve up to 500 patients daily. Dr Nair said it provides room for growth over the next four to five years. The facility will be officially opened next month.

Besides the new centre, the group's 9,000 square foot facility at Holland Village is expected to be ready in the first quarter of next year. Last December, Raffles Hospital announced a S\$310 million expansion to build a 20-storey high tower devoted to ambulatory care. The extension is expected to be completed in early 2017.

Raffles Medical shares fell 13 cents to S\$4.51 on Tuesday.