

HOME BY NOON: STREAMLINING PROCESSES FOR EARLIER DISCHARGE

To improve our patient's experience and raise the level of care, NUH has embarked on an early discharge initiative so that more patients can make their way home earlier in the day.

For many patients, there is no better feeling than the anticipation of going home after a stay in hospital. Before this can happen, there are usually many processes that need to be completed – authorisation paperwork by doctors, getting the medications ready, planning of follow-up clinic appointments or transitional care needs. This may lead to longer waits and later discharges.

To improve early discharge rates, the team at NUH Ward 55, comprising nurses, clinicians and more, pulled together to review their processes and identify ways to enable earlier discharge, with a goal of increasing the number of patients who are discharged before 11.30am.

According to Advanced Practice Nurse Koh Pei Si, the team worked together to more pro-actively prepare patients for discharge. Areas include identifying suitable patients earlier, preparing relevant paperwork for discharge ahead of time, and initiating other discharge processes the previous day. With discharge papers and medications in order by the next morning, patients are ready for discharge by 11.30am. Families who arrive on time to pick up their loved ones get to leave the hospital promptly and without further delays. Most of them have expressed great satisfaction in this aspect.

This improvement provides additional knock-on benefits. It allows the ward to accept new acute cases much faster, thereby reducing the wait times for patients in need of a hospital bed, for example, patients in the Emergency Department. As these admissions tend to be earlier as well, it allows the nurses and the care team ample time to plan and coordinate treatment and care for the new patient.

Last but not least, pushing early discharge also helps the hospital's bed management unit to assign the patients to the right ward in a timely manner. "Ultimately, it puts patients at the centre of care by reorganising work flows that improve their care experience and outcomes," says Dr Amelia Santosa, Senior Consultant, Division of Rheumatology. "Having a common

goal of timely discharge and safe transition of our patients back into community keeps the team committed to the process and our NUH vision of incredible care.”

With this success of early discharges, the team from NUH Ward 55 is **sharing** these best practices **with** other wards, so that more of our patients will benefit from the overall improvement of care and get to go home by noon!

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