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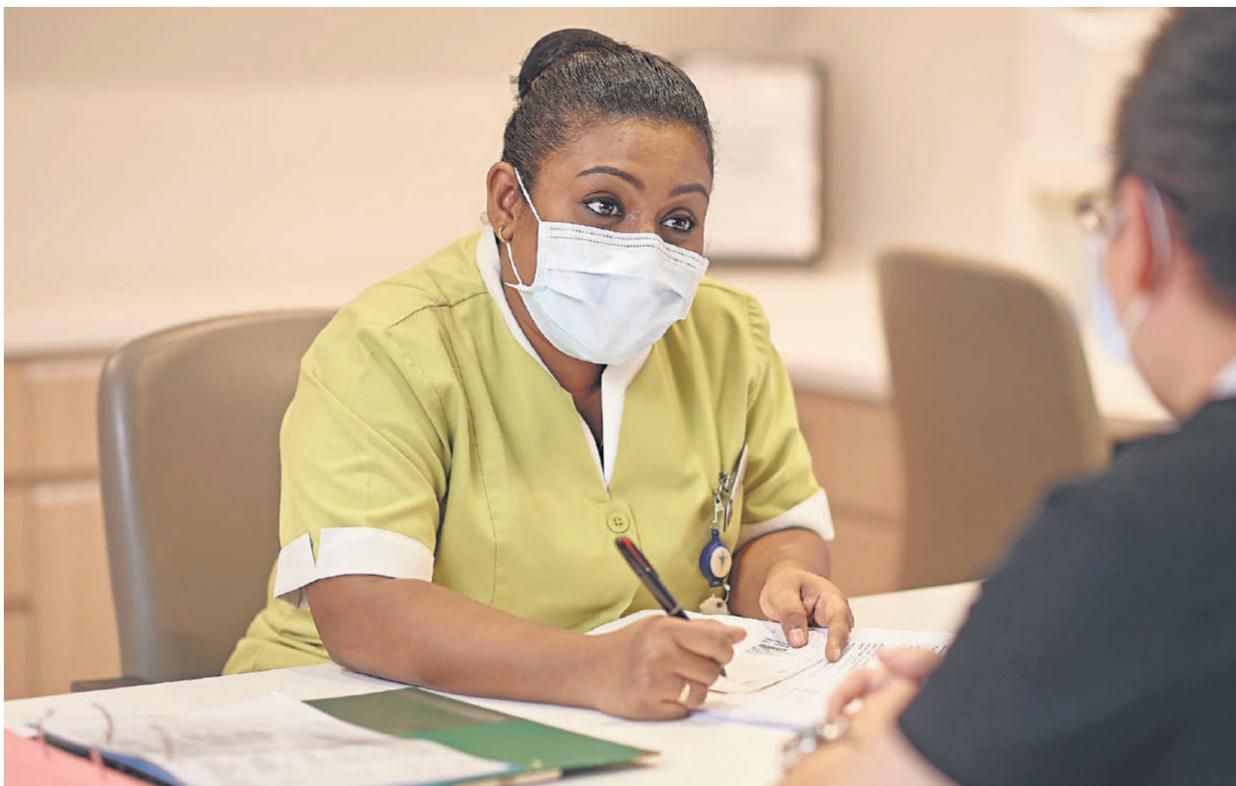


PHOTO: TED CHEN

Serving a greater purpose

Becoming a patient service associate allows Ms VijayaSharmini to apply her administrative skills more meaningfully

BY PEH YI WEN

Ensuring her mask is worn properly and front counters are clean and sanitised are the first two steps Ms VijayaSharmini takes at 8am every morning. She does this in the wards of Yishun Community Hospital, where she is based as a patient service associate before the opening of Woodlands Health Campus in 2022.

The 33-year-old found it a challenge to adjust to this drastic change in environment, having previously held administrative roles that mainly involved the handling of clerical paperwork in an office.

But it didn't take Ms VijayaSharmini long to find her groove. Integrating the organisational skills she developed from eight years of administrative work experience into her current workflow came naturally. This helped her to plan and complete her tasks efficiently.

Her responsibilities involve scheduling medical appointments and expediting urgent requests, and providing financial counselling to patients and their families. She also works closely with nurses and doctors to ensure admission and discharge cases are handled smoothly every day.

"Other than improving my overall communication skills with both colleagues and patients in this new role, I am also striving to learn and understand more medical and clinical terminologies so that I am able to explain them to patients clearly," she says.

Fulfilling journey

No two days at the hospital are the same for Ms VijayaSharmini. Working at the frontline gives her the opportunity to interact with people from all walks of life.

While she often lends a listening ear to troubled patients who share their life stories, others have also given her words of appreciation and encouragement.

But nothing warms her heart and gives her a sense of satisfaction than witnessing the recovery of patients as they are discharged from the hospital.

Being in the healthcare sector in the thick of the Covid-19 pandemic also made Ms VijayaSharmini realise the important role every frontliner plays, as she sees individuals coming together to work as a team.

She adds: "What I love most about my work environment is being able to call my team my family. The doctors, nurses and colleagues are always happy to assist me despite hectic schedules in the ward."

To those inspired to join the healthcare industry, she encourages them to take the leap into this meaningful vocation where you can make a difference in the lives of others, regardless of your role.

Learning on the job

While she does encounter patients who get frustrated over language barriers when she explains billing and procedures for their stay, Ms VijayaSharmini's language skills have come in handy. Her ability to speak some Mandarin, Hokkien and Malay often eases the tension and enables her to understand her patients' needs better.

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MS VIJAYASHARMINI, patient service associate, Woodlands Health Campus

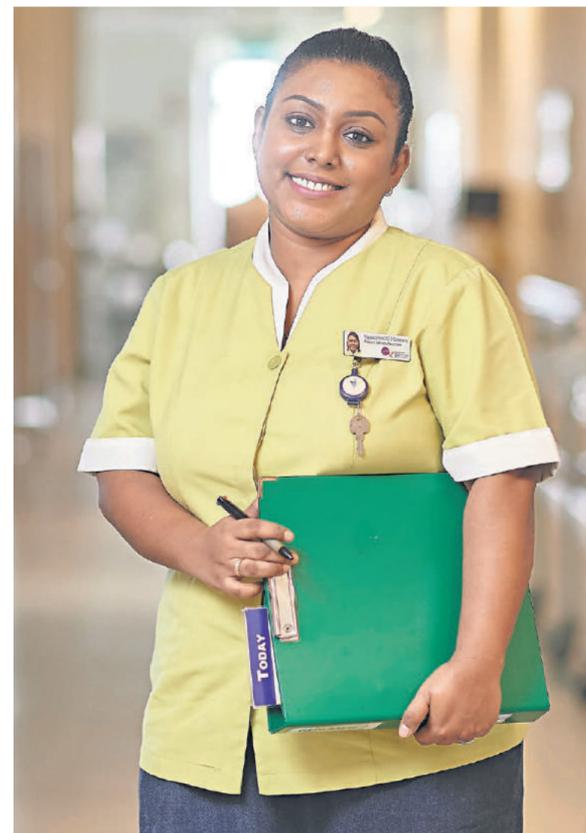


PHOTO: TED CHEN

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The 1,800-bedded Woodlands Health Campus (WHC) is a purpose-built Campus comprising a fully integrated acute and community hospital, specialist outpatient clinics, and intermediate and long-term care facilities. It is slated to open progressively from 2022.

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