

Putting heart into service

Mount Alvernia Hospital is committed to providing patients with the best health care

by lai yi ming

SERVE all, with love – this is the motto that steers Mount Alvernia Hospital in establishing itself as a comprehensive health-care provider with a heart.

This year, its patient-centric efforts have again been recognised with its third consecutive Heritage Brand award, an accolade given to brands established for more than 30 years.

Says Mr Khoo Chow Huat, the hospital's chief executive officer: "This is the third consecutive year that Mount Alvernia Hospital is participating in the Singapore Prestige Brand Awards and we are very honoured to be recognised as an SPBA Heritage Brand winner for three straight years.

"We see this as an affirmation of the progress we have made in advancing our brand, which was built on a strong tradition of care and medical excellence over the past 50 years."

The hospital was founded by the Franciscan Missionaries of the Divine Motherhood (FMDM) sisters in 1961 and celebrates its 50th anniversary this year.

He says: "Mount Alvernia Hospital was born from a vision by the FMDM Sisters. They wanted to build a professionally run hospital for all people, regardless of race or religion, a hospital where everyone would be welcome, treated with consideration and dignity, and given the best possible medical care."

The hospital was handed to a management team in 1986.

Mr Khoo explains: "'Serve all, with love' translates into a tangible brand promise to our customers who can expect from us high-quality medical services that are value-for-money, based on good ethics and delivered with compassion. This is delivered through our people, facilities and services."

The hospital carried out a rebranding exercise in 2008 where the hospital logo

was updated, customer service initiatives were rolled out and services and facilities were enhanced. This built on the hospital's already well-established reputation.

"Having a strong branding and getting recognition like SPBA definitely helped to raise the profile of the hospital in the public eye. This is especially useful when we venture into new markets overseas where people may not be so familiar with the Alvernia brand."

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– Mr Khoo Chow Huat,
CEO, Mount Alvernia Hospital

To ensure that the sense of mission is ingrained in staff, the hospital runs regular mission awareness sessions and conducts talks. Staff are also involved in community health screening projects where it provides health screening services in the community and churches, as well as overseas. More than 90 per cent of staff volunteer for these initiatives.

To develop its people, more sponsorships for professional development, including degree courses and overseas attachments are offered. It also concentrates on enhancing service values and behaviours by sending staff for

training and equipping them with tools for delivering excellent service.

The hospital, which was known more for maternity services, has also developed into a full-fledged acute-care general hospital equipped with the medical expertise and facilities to care for patients across a wide spectrum of medical specialties ranging from ophthalmology to orthopaedics, cardiothoracic surgery to neurosurgery and general surgery to general consultation, says Mr Khoo.

More medical specialists have been added to offer more comprehensive services.

It has also stepped up efforts to attract foreign patients. It now has two information centres in Bangladesh and Indonesia and plans to add more in the next two years.

In the coming months, the hospital will be unveiling its improved facilities, including an expanded main lobby, a new side extension and a multi-storey medical centre block.

It uses various media channels such as website, newsletters, advertisements, events and social media activities to communicate the changes and engage their audiences on an ongoing basis, says Mr Khoo.

"Health care is certainly a competitive industry. Within Singapore, more hospitals, both private and public, are coming up. Existing hospitals are also actively expanding and upgrading themselves.

He adds that Malaysia and Thailand have been actively positioning themselves as regional hubs and attracting foreigners to their hospitals.

"We will therefore have to focus on our main value proposition, which is to provide high quality medical care that is value-for-money and delivered with sincere compassion and empathy, and continue to enhance it, so that we remain an attractive health-care choice for consumers."



PHOTO: MOUNT ALVERNIA HOSPITAL