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## **JOINT NEWS RELEASE**

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# **NTU Singapore, A\*STAR, and NHG launch S\$15 million BioMedtech incubator**

To facilitate the clinical adoption of new technologies that will create value for patients, **Nanyang Technological University, Singapore (NTU Singapore), Agency for Science, Technology and Research (A\*STAR), and National Healthcare Group (NHG)** today launched **co11ab Novena (co11ab)**, an incubator to support biomedical technology (BioMedtech) start-ups make the leap from research and development into commercialisation of their innovations.

**co11ab** is the first such outfit to be embedded in Health City Novena, an integrated community of healthcare, medical education, and translational research. Located in NTU Singapore's Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine (LKCMedicine), the S\$15 million incubator aims to be a national innovation and translational hub that brings together research, clinical, and venture creation activities, creating an environment that spurs knowledge sharing, innovation, and collaboration.

co11ab is expected to be fully operational in the first quarter of 2023. It will drive new BioMedtech start-ups by providing entrepreneurs access to industry expertise, mentorship, and funding support to develop their ideas and concepts into products. The start-ups will also be guided to implement viable growth strategies to expand overseas.

The collaboration was inked today between NTU, A\*STAR, and NHG.

**NTU Senior Vice President (Health & Life Sciences) and LKCMedicine Dean Professor Joseph Sung** said: "Interest in BioMedtech has been on the rise due to demand for innovative and affordable healthcare solutions on the back of rising healthcare costs and ageing populations. But due to technical, market, regulatory, and certification challenges, the lab-to-market for BioMedtech start-ups are often long and arduous. The collaborations formalised today pair start-ups incubated at co11ab with the medical and industrial expertise of NTU LKCMedicine faculty and our partners to

overcome these challenges. The result is an innovation ecosystem that benefits research and innovation, and nurtures next-generation entrepreneurs in the burgeoning BioMedtech space.”

**Professor Tan Sze Wee, Assistant Chief Executive of A\*STAR’s Innovation & Enterprise Division**, said: “Platforms like co11ab are important to bring together the research ecosystem’s collective strengths and capabilities in support of R&D translation, spinoff creations and incubations to bring health technologies to the clinic and the market. We look forward to deeper partnerships to create greater health and social impact for Singapore.”

**Professor Benjamin Seet, Deputy Group Chief Executive Officer (Education and Research), NHG**, said: “Research needs to be translated all the way into the clinic to make a difference to patients. For this to happen, we need companies that are able to make new drugs and devices, or to provide new clinical services. This is where co11ab comes in, to bridge the gulf between good research and successful companies.”

Leading the efforts at co11ab is its **Executive Director, Associate Professor Yen Choo** from NTU LKCMedicine. He has over 25 years of experience in academic technology transfer and venture building.

**Assoc Prof Yen Choo** said: “Owing to the incubator’s location in NTU’s medical school surrounded by national research centres and hospitals, co11ab is uniquely able to support start-up ventures at each stage of the BioMedtech value chain, from R&D through prototype development, to clinical testing, product launch and beyond.”

### **Supporting aspiring BioMedtech entrepreneurs**

Marking the launch is a new partnership between co11ab and the Singapore Medtech Consortium (SMC) to provide start-ups at co11ab with equipment and expertise that a start-up may not have in-house to accelerate product development. SMC is a group of 72 Singapore-based manufacturers, distributors, and venture capitalists that help Medtech start-ups with early-stage product development.

Through this collaboration, SMC will jointly operate the engineering makerspace at co11ab, providing prototyping equipment such as 3D printers, as well as mentorship and consultancy services in the areas of Medtech product development, innovation, and entrepreneurship.

Other facilities at co11ab include a life science laboratory with state-of-the-art facilities and equipment, office space, and a communal space that facilitates discussions and collaboration.

By being located in the heart of the Novena healthcare district, start-ups incubated by co11ab can potentially tap on the expertise of NTU LKCMedicine scientists and NHG clinicians, who specialise in the following key research areas:

- Skin and chronic wounds
- Ageing/Rehabilitation
- Mental Health
- Infectious Diseases
- Metabolic Health/Vascular Diseases
- Regenerative Medicine

co11ab will also work together with partners in programmes and events that encourage a culture of innovation, collaboration, and entrepreneurship. Examples include innovation programmes such as makeathons, which provide an opportunity for NTU Singapore, A\*STAR, and NHG staff to transform their innovative ideas into prototypes.

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**Notes to Editor:**

The members of the co11ab Steering Committee are:

- Assoc Prof Yen Choo, Executive Director, co11ab
- Prof Tan Sze Wee, Assistant Chief Executive, Innovation & Enterprise, A\*STAR
- Prof Benjamin Seet, Deputy Group Chief Executive Officer (Education and Research), NHG
- David Toh, Chief Executive Officer, NTUitive
- Irene Cheong, Executive Director, Innovation & Enterprise, A\*STAR
- Assoc Prof Steven Thng, Clinical Director, Translational Research Office, NHG

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### ***About Nanyang Technological University, Singapore***

A research-intensive public university, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore (NTU Singapore) has 33,000 undergraduate and postgraduate students in the Engineering, Business, Science, Medicine, Humanities, Arts, & Social Sciences, and Graduate colleges.

NTU is also home to world-renowned autonomous institutes – the National Institute of Education, S Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Earth Observatory of Singapore, and Singapore Centre for Environmental Life Sciences Engineering – and various leading research centres such as the Nanyang Environment & Water Research Institute (NEWRI) and Energy Research Institute @ NTU (ERI@N).

Under the NTU Smart Campus vision, the University harnesses the power of digital technology and tech-enabled solutions to support better learning and living experiences, the discovery of new knowledge, and the sustainability of resources.

Ranked amongst the world's top universities, the University's main campus is also frequently listed among the world's most beautiful. Known for its sustainability, over 95% of its building projects are certified Green Mark Platinum. Apart from its main campus, NTU also has a medical campus in Novena, Singapore's healthcare district.

For more information, visit [www.ntu.edu.sg](http://www.ntu.edu.sg)

### ***About Agency for Science, Technology and Research (A\*STAR)***

The Agency for Science, Technology and Research (A\*STAR) is Singapore's lead public sector R&D agency. Through open innovation, we collaborate with our partners in both the public and private sectors to benefit the economy and society. As a Science and Technology Organisation, A\*STAR bridges the gap between academia and industry. Our research creates economic growth and jobs for Singapore, and enhances lives by improving societal outcomes in healthcare, urban living, and sustainability. A\*STAR plays a key role in nurturing scientific talent and leaders for the wider research community and industry. A\*STAR's R&D activities span biomedical sciences to physical sciences and engineering, with research entities primarily located in Biopolis and Fusionopolis. For ongoing news, visit [www.a-star.edu.sg](http://www.a-star.edu.sg).

## ***About National Healthcare Group***

The National Healthcare Group (NHG) is a leader in public healthcare in Singapore, recognised at home and abroad for the quality of its medical expertise and facilities. Care is provided through an integrated network of seven primary care polyclinics, acute care and tertiary hospitals, national specialty centres and business divisions. Together they bring a rich legacy of medical expertise to our philosophy of integrated patient-centred care.

NHG's vision is "Adding Years of Healthy Life". This vision goes beyond merely healing the sick to the more difficult and infinitely more rewarding task of preventing illness and preserving health and quality of life. With some 22,000 staff, NHG aims to provide care that is patient-centric, accessible, seamless, comprehensive, appropriate and cost-effective.

As the Regional Health System (RHS) for Central-North Singapore, it is vital for NHG to partner and collaborate with stakeholders, community advisors, and voluntary welfare organisations. Together with our patients, their families and caregivers, we aim to deliver integrated healthcare services and programmes that help in Adding Years of Healthy Life to all concerned.

More information is available at [www.nhg.com.sg](http://www.nhg.com.sg).