

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

22 June 2010

### **NHCS SAVES YOUNG MOTHER-OF-THREE FROM MASSIVE HEART ATTACK**

- 37-year-old Dutch lady suffered acute massive heart attack, seven days after giving birth to her third child in Singapore
- National Heart Centre Singapore (NHCS) saved her life with timely emergency interventions and surgery
- Advanced surgical care and heart assist devices enable her return to the Netherlands where she will wait for a new heart

Just seven days after delivering her third child in Singapore, Angelique Schoeber was hit with a catastrophic event – she suffered a massive heart attack. At the National Heart Centre Singapore (NHCS), Dr Stanley Chia, Consultant, Department of Cardiology, found two major branches of the left main artery severely blocked and performed an emergency coronary angioplasty to improve the blood flow.

But the massive heart attack had badly damaged her heart muscle, leaving it unable to pump enough blood to meet the body's needs.

To maintain the oxygen and blood circulation to her body and organs, Dr Tan Teing Ee, Senior Consultant, Department of Cardiothoracic Surgery, NHCS, put her on a short term life support system - the extracorporeal membrane oxygenation (ECMO).

Dr Tan explains, "By putting her on the ECMO support, we can preserve the function of her other organs and stabilise her condition until she can be assessed for more permanent lifesaving measures like the heart assist device followed by a heart transplant."

While her other organs are functioning well, Angelique's heart showed no signs of recovering by the ninth day. Her doctors then decided to implant her with a left ventricular assist device (LVAD) known as the HeartMate II. The device takes over the function of her failing heart and helps to prolong and improve her quality of life while waiting for a heart transplant. The surgery took place on 19 May 2010.

“I remember the severe pain in my chest and being sedated. When I woke up 10 days later, I have to relearn how to do things for myself. But I am getting better every day with the help of the doctors and staff here. We have been living in Vietnam for the past nine years and I was in Singapore only for giving birth. So we were very lucky to be here when the heart attack happened,” said Angelique who is now looking forward to spending the summer holidays with her husband and children.

Six weeks after the traumatic event, Angelique is now medically fit to travel home. The mother-of-three will be travelling on a commercial flight with her doctors and family to the Netherlands, where she will be transferred to the University Medical Centre Utrecht for subsequent medical management.

Dr C Sivathasan, Co-Director, Heart and Lung Transplant Programme shares, “What we did for Angelique is a multidisciplinary team effort. Besides the maturity of the Mechanical Heart Assist Device Programme here, the expertise of the doctors, surgeons, nurses and allied health professionals also contributed greatly to her recovery process.”

NHCS started the Mechanical Heart Device Programme in 2001 to support patients with end-stage heart failure. In the past nine years, the programme has achieved many milestones and has helped even more patients. NHCS is currently the only centre in Southeast Asia using the HeartMate II LVAD device.

### **Media Contact**

Teo Hwee Leng

Corporate Communications

Tel: 6236 7415

Email: [teo.hwee.leng@nhcs.com.sg](mailto:teo.hwee.leng@nhcs.com.sg)

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### **About the National Heart Centre Singapore**

The National Heart Centre Singapore (新加坡国家心脏中心) is a 185-bed national and regional referral centre for cardiovascular diseases. A one-stop facility with the largest heart specialists group in Singapore, NHCS treats complex cases and sees the highest volume of heart patients locally.

Each year, the centre handles over 90,000 outpatient consultations, 6,000 interventional and surgical procedures and 9,000 inpatients. Its outcomes for heart attack treatment, balloon angioplasty with stenting and coronary bypass surgery have been shown to be equivalent to international standards.

NHCS is the first heart centre outside USA and in Asia to receive the prestigious Joint Commission International (JCI) since 2005, which is an assurance for safe and quality patient care for the patients.