

# Nursing among 11 new healthcare courses

By LEE U-WEN

ONLY six months have passed since its inception, but Parkway College is already beginning to make its mark as a provider of healthcare education.

Yesterday, the college – a subsidiary of Parkway Education – launched 11 new courses in health sciences to train more manpower to meet increasing demand and cater to the growing healthcare-related needs of Singapore's ageing population.

Standing out from the pack of four diploma and seven certificate courses is a diploma in nursing – the first such diploma run by a local private tertiary college to be accredited by the Singapore Nursing Board.

Likewise, three other courses – in clinical governance, healthcare management and information technology (healthcare) – are among the first to be offered in Singapore with a heavy focus on healthcare application.

Parkway Education CEO Low Teck Seng said the college has an advantage over the two polytechnics that have nursing schools here, in that students can use Parkway's hospitals and facilities for their attachments.

"When you want to train nurses, for instance, you need that clinical experience," he told BT. "We also have the ability to have our doctors teach some of the courses, and this is a key selling point."

Extra core modules in areas such as customer service management have been included to give students all-round training in today's competitive environment, he said. Prof Low, a former principal of Republic Polytechnic, began work at Parkway on July 1 this year. He also chairs Parkway College's academic advisory committee.

The diploma in nursing is expected to go some way to boost the supply of nurses in Singapore. As of 2006, there were 20,927 nurses

here, with about a quarter of them coming from countries such as the Philippines and China.

Demand for nurses will soar when new hospitals in Novena and Yishun open in the coming years.

Parkway's first batch of 120 students will begin classes later this year, and Parkway College CEO Nellie Tang expects the student population to grow to about 5,000 in five years.

Speaking at a ceremony yesterday to mark the launch of the courses, Mrs Tang said that by then, Parkway's courses and range of offerings will cover almost the entire spectrum of health sciences, which will require an expansion of its city campus.

For now, classes will be taught at Parkway College's existing premises at the former Housing Board HQ in Bukit Merah.

Prof Low said he wants to grow the college until it can stand toe-to-toe with the polytechnics in terms of quality and reputation.