

Setting a Model for Home-Based Medical Care in Miaoli Communities

By Yeh Chia-Chou, Superintendent of Sanyi Tzu Chi Chinese Medicine Hospital

On August 1, 2000, I arrived at Dalin Tzu Chi Hospital to attend a training course for Chinese Medicine resident physicians. This marks the beginning of my serendipitous connection with Tzu Chi. Dr. Yeh Ming-Hsien and I have been deeply committed to spreading love and sharing compassion in local communities and remote townships in close collaboration with Tzu Chi volunteers since our youth. We have also participated in volunteer medical consultations and home visits for almost 20 years.

After I became an attending physician, I not only performed clinical work but also took on some duties of an administrative supervisor to learn the ropes of administrative management. However, I quickly realized that I'm not cut out for administrative work and thereby resigned from my administrative position to pursue a doctoral degree and engage in academic research in the fields of Chinese Medicine treatments and cure mechanisms for colds and vertigo. It never



occurred to me that my research findings would prove extremely useful for the treatment of novel coronavirus pneumonia and long COVID symptoms.

My interests are wide-ranging. I have studied interior design and have worked as a computer programmer for some time. Looking back, it is quite remarkable that all these experiences seem, in hindsight,

like preparations for the launch of Sanyi Tzu Chi Chinese Medicine Hospital.

I have devoted my knowledge and abilities and kept my nose to the grindstone for two decades in preparation for the launch of the Chinese Medicine Hospital and thereby realize the wishes of Dharma Master Cheng Yen. The goal was to revitalize the original spirit of voluntary medical consultations and house calls of the Buddhist Compassion Relief Tzu Chi Foundation. We strive to care for patients in local communities and remote corners that lack medical resources in a down-to-earth manner by following the footsteps of the Master.

A few months prior to the launch of the hospital, I accepted the appointment as superintendent. In the period from July to September 2022, I sometimes rushed to the construction site to inspect the building. Back then, it was still a rough, unfinished, and empty building with no facilities and equipment. I made my rounds on the site to inspect every single aspect of the project including the state of the stairs, natural lighting conditions, and air flow. The next step was to get a clear understanding of Sanyi Township and the demand for medical assistance among Miaoli County residents. Prior to the official launch of the hospital, we provided medical care and consultation for around 180 patients to determine the healthcare

needs of Miaoli County residents and inhabitants of Sanyi in particular.

Through these volunteer medical consultations and house calls, we reached the conclusion that the circumstances and conditions in Miaoli County are identical to those the Master encountered in his earliest efforts to offer medical treatment, medication, and voluntary consultations. All residents have expressed the wish for a nearby hospital that provides affordable medical care in the vicinity of their homes.

In addition to maintaining the health of local residents, Sanyi Tzu Chi Chinese Medicine Hospital aims to incorporate philanthropic and humanistic concepts into its daily operations. Our main focus is not hi-tech or critical care, but rather to bring health care to local communities, homes, and all residents. We harness the resources of the Long-Term Care 2.0 Plan and our unique characteristics and competitive advantages, namely our volunteers, to facilitate the detection of cases requiring care and assistance. We are firmly committed to our hospital's mission of developing a new medical service model in line with the expectations of the Master. The ultimate goal is to turn Sanyi Tzu Chi Chinese Medicine Hospital into a paragon of Tzu Chi community-based homecare.