

# Taipei Tzu Chi Hospital Upgraded to Medical Center









By Huang Hsiao-Chuan

With a view to safeguarding medical service quality and patient rights, the Joint Commission of Taiwan fully implemented the new hospital and teaching hospital accreditation system in 2007. Taipei Tzu Chi Hospital participated in its first medical center accreditation in 2013 and was awarded the status of a Quasi-Medical Center. In 2023, we underwent another medical center hospital accreditation. Our overall performance received unanimous praise from the accreditation committee members and the accreditation process was successfully concluded.

Superintendent Chao You-Chen points out that the accreditation process

relies on an external review mechanism consisting of comprehensive inspections in the three dimensions of healthcare, hospital management, and education & research. The goal lies in the enhancement of healthcare quality and implementation of patient-centered care. Taipei Tzu Chi Hospital faces this accreditation in a calm and composed manner and demonstrates the standard of its daily operations in a truthful fashion to give the committee members a clear understanding of the implementation status of its service tenets and vision. Despite the postponement of the accreditation process for three years due to the pandemic, the hospital



**During the three-year pandemic, Taipei Tzu Chi Hospital did its utmost to save the lives of critically ill patients, turning into the hospital with the largest number of admitted COVID-positive patients nationwide in 2021.**



staff didn't relent in its efforts to improve the quality of its medical services with the ultimate goal of saving lives, which represents a key highlight of this successfully passed accreditation.

### **3-year Pandemic – Braving the Storm with Courage and Astuteness**

In 2021, Taiwan was engulfed in a new local wave of the COVID-19 epidemic with Greater Taipei as the hardest-hit area. The number of cases continued to soar. Taipei Tzu Chi Hospital responded immediately by reallocating medical care capabilities to the rapid establishment of five dedicated COVID wards and outdoor screening stations and designation of 33 dedicated ICU beds. The hospital further undertook the heavy responsibility of providing care at the Xindian Centralized Quarantine Center. In that year, we were the hospital with the largest number of admitted COVID-positive patients nationwide. There were no cases of nosocomial infection. In addition, Taipei Tzu Chi Hospital set up a positive-pressure operating room equipped with a negative-pressure anteroom to meet urgent surgery needs of COVID-positive patients due to sudden disease. An emergency caesarian section was performed for a COVID-positive pregnant woman to save lives in the nick of time. Our medical



**During the COVID-19 pandemic, the medical team of Taipei Tzu Chi Hospital provided assistance in vaccination administration in the Greater Taipei area.**

team also provided valuable support for vaccination stations in the Jing Si Halls in Xindian, Shuanghe, Sanchong, Banqiao, and Luzhou and proceeded to local campuses to vaccinate teenagers and thereby discharge our duty and safeguard lives. Our efforts were recognized with an Outstanding Contribution Award for excellent achievements in the field of epidemic prevention and an award for numerous contributions as a hospital responsible for reinforced quarantine hotels.

In 2022, the country was hit by a serious outbreak of the pandemic. Against the backdrop of a critical shortage of



**As of the end of December 2023, the Peripheral Artery Center has successfully unblocked the peripheral vessels of 1,965 legs of over 1,000 admitted diabetes patients through catheterization, thereby preventing high-leg amputation.**

medical care capabilities, Taipei Tzu Chi Hospital reactivated its dedicated wards, took over responsibility for the centralized quarantine center, set up community screening stations, and offered vaccination and outpatient consultation services for COVID patients by harnessing the experience gained over the past few years. In addition, we cooperated with primary care clinics, volunteers of the Northern Taiwan Chapter of Tzu Chi International Medical Association, and

Tzu Chi community volunteers in the provision of care and concern through phone calls to 563,736 individuals in six major regions (Xindian, Luzhou, Shuangxi, Pingxi, Gongliao, Ruifang) in support of the new home care model launched by New Taipei City Government. The New Taipei City Department of Health assigned us another 93,364 cases (services were provided to a total of 71,844 individuals). Our medical team engaged in multidimensional research in the fields

of environmental sterilization, dietary habits, and Chinese herbal medicine beverages to alleviate complications and develop complementary therapies for COVID-positive patients admitted for hospitalization with the ultimate goal of providing medical circles with a novel understanding of COVID-19.

### **Smart Healthcare to Enhance the Quality of Medical Care**

Since its inauguration, Taipei Tzu Chi Hospital has been firmly committed to enhancing its performance in the field of medical care and clinical indicators through visual dashboards. Automated, real-time, and visualized monitoring of medical care quality and patient safety, which represents one of our main strengths, enables us to gain a clear grasp of abnormal conditions and adopt required measures in the nick of time. In 2016, we launched our digital transformation program, which resulted in the successful upgrade of our healthcare information and administration system in 2020. We have developed various smart systems by harnessing the latest technologies such as a smart ward round system, a pathology barcode system, smart pharmacy services, a smart laboratory department, and a medical equipment inspection system. A user-oriented design concept has been adopted to provide effective

assistance in clinical decision-making, reduce work error rates, and thereby enhance service quality and patient safety. Our greatly improved information system left an extremely positive impression during this accreditation, which was one of the key factors for approval by the committee members.

In addition, Taipei Tzu Chi Hospital has invested in a wide range of improvement projects to optimize the teaching and research environment, ensure the provision of comprehensive resources, encourage the development of specialty care services by hospital departments, and facilitate the acquisition of numerous national quality marks and patient care quality certifications. The hospital upholds the



**Taipei Tzu Chi Hospital is capable of performing heart, liver, kidney, and cornea transplantations and is qualified to conduct living donor liver and kidney transplantations (the image shows a heart transplantation).**





principle of non-amputation for peripheral vascular treatment, funnel chest corrective surgery, emergency treatment for patients who have suffered out-of-hospital cardiac arrest (OHCA), and ultrasound-guided, minimally invasive foot and ankle surgery. As of the end of December 2023, Dr. Huang Hsuan-Li, Director of the Division of Cardiology, has successfully unblocked the peripheral vessels of 1,965 legs of over 1,000 admitted diabetes patients through catheterization, thereby preventing high-leg amputation. This matches the results of top-rated medical centers worldwide. Dr. Cheng Chien-Po, thoracic surgeon and Director of the Department of Surgery, treats funnel chest patients with an improved version of Nuss minimally invasive, corrective surgery with the ultimate goal of improved surgery safety and minimization of the risk of potential complications. Taipei Tzu Chi Hospital tops the list of regional hospitals and above with a cumulative number of over 1,300 Nuss surgeries performed by Dr. Cheng.

Furthermore, a team led by Orthopedist Wang Chen-Chi has developed a new type of minimally invasive tendon surgery for patients who have suffered an Achilles tendon rupture. The team performs sutures by relying on ultrasound-guided, minimally invasive surgery techniques. This technique not only allows the shortening of the incision length from 10cm to 0.8-1cm but also



**Whenever a disaster strikes, Taipei Tzu Chi Hospital provides on-site volunteer medical consultations and disaster relief; the image shows Superintendent Chao You-Cheng offering voluntary consultations to flood disaster victims in Mozambique, Africa in 2019.**

reduces the incidence of post-surgery complications from 15% to 1%. This pioneering surgery technique which is applied to various indications has turned Taipei Tzu Chi Hospital into the top choice for learning innovative corrective surgery methods for foot and ankle deformities and minimally invasive surgery in the field of foot and ankle sports medicine.

The medical team also saves lives through cross-team collaboration. The Divisions of Emergency and Cardiovascular Surgery have formed an ECPR (ECMO+CPR) team for initiation of ECPR on OHCA patients who meet

certain conditions. Upon stabilization of vital signs, the Division of Cardiovascular Surgery conducts target temperature management to lower the body temperature of the patient and prevent permanent impairment of neurological functions due to infections or cephalitis. In addition to an effective decrease of the length of hospitalization and death rates, this care regimen has resulted in the highest recovery and discharge rate among critical care hospitals in New Taipei City.

### **Taking Relief from Suffering to the Next Level through Professionalism**

In sync with its focus on professionalism, Taipei Tzu Chi Hospital is steadfastly committed to holistic healthcare through the provision of all-inclusive care encompassing the physical, mental, and spiritual dimensions. We have made a long-term commitment to offering medical services in remote townships



**Through their silent contributions, Tzu Chi members and volunteers will always serve as the hospital's most potent backing and perfect role models for all hospital staff members to emulate.**





including Shiding, Ruifang, and Pingxi and providing volunteer medical consultations and disaster relief in Myanmar, the Philippines, Mexico, Mozambique, Cambodia, Jordan, Nepal, and Sri Lanka. As a matter of fact, two-thirds of the patients hospitalized at Taipei Tzu Chi Hospital are low- or no-income individuals and almost 50% have low education levels (junior high school or below). This clearly demonstrates that most of our patients belong to underprivileged groups. The clinical care team therefore evaluates the mental state of every patient upon admission with the aid of the Brief Symptom Rating Scale (BSRS-5) to facilitate the early detection of patients in need of help. Superintendent Chao points out that care for disadvantaged groups has been the stated purpose of the hospital since its inception. The hospital is therefore firmly determined to perpetuate this spirit of serving the destitute and assisting patients facing hardship to stay true to its original calling. The ultimate goal is to ensure that every patient at Taipei Tzu Chi Hospital is treated with the greatest respect and compassion.

Superintendent Chao is deeply grateful to Dharma Master Cheng Yen for establishing the Tzu Chi Hospital and to every staff member for their dedicated contributions. He asserts that “human-oriented care and respect for life comprise the noble mission of Taipei Tzu Chi

Hospital. This lofty commitment serves as the driving force for the joint efforts of myself and all staff members to assist all people in need and optimize medical care quality and patient safety in a step-by-step manner.” He also deeply appreciates the silent contributions of all Tzu Chi members and volunteers who will always serve as the hospital’s most potent backing. Through their unobtrusive instruction



**Tzu Chi volunteers repair balcony railings and remove rust in scorching hot weather.**

and guidance based on their personal experience, they set an example for our staff members to emulate. In the future, Taipei Tzu Chi Hospital will step up its efforts to provide even more outstanding medical services by building on its current foundation.

### **Maximization of Positive Energy in Sync with the Times**

Superintendent Chao affirms that the “Taiwanese healthcare sector is truly exceptional and that the pressure stems from the constant pursuit of perfection. In the face of rising expectations of all citizens, we must continue to forge ahead and make an all-out effort to develop unique medical care features to attract more and more highly talented individuals to join our team.”

Deputy Superintendent Hsu Jung-Yuan, who is responsible for the Accreditation Management Section notes that cohesion is the biggest strength of Taipei Tzu Chi Hospital compared to other medical centers. In an age that stresses interdisciplinarity and inter-professionalism, all hospital staff members must be able to fill in for each other immediately and jointly forge ahead toward the common goals in a spirit of unity and solidarity. He further stresses that “setting the right targets is a big challenge. If we set them too low, we won’t be able to achieve our ultimate goal

of becoming a medical center; if we set them too high, we need to consider how much manpower, supplies, and funding is required. At least we are fully aware of our current position on the path toward realizing the hospital’s mission and vision and are firmly committed to an approach of incremental structural improvements by maximizing the results achieved through investment of limited resources and manpower. This strategy has been the key to success in this accreditation process.”

With a view to providing its patients with the best care possible, Taipei Tzu Chi Hospital spares no effort to develop its healthcare professionalism and enhance the quality of its medical services to fulfill its responsibility as a critical care hospital in New Taipei City. In addition to forming Cardio Rescue, ECPR, and Preterm Transport Teams, we have adopted novel medical equipment technology including a 3D endoscopic surgery system, 4th Generation da Vinci Surgical System, and a hybrid operating room. The medical team is also actively engaged in the fields of organ transplantation and cancer treatment. Deputy Superintendent Chang Yao-Jen points out that “Taipei Tzu Chi Hospital is capable of performing heart, liver, kidney, and cornea transplantations and is qualified to conduct living donor liver and kidney transplantations. This is a great starting point. In the future, we will focus on transplantation quantity,





all-inclusive cancer therapies, and strengthening of innovative R&D efforts and pharmacological clinical trials with the ultimate goal of benefiting our patients.” Deputy Superintendent Chang Heng-Chia further stresses that, since its inauguration, Taipei Tzu Chi Hospital has been firmly committed to providing medical center-level services that conform to the required standards. However, the improvement of medical care quality and patient safety is a never-ending process and there are constant advances in the field of medical equipment and technologies. Taipei Tzu Chi Hospital already has a visualized, real-time, and automated patient safety management system in place. In the future, we will strive to achieve more comprehensive, proactive management by harnessing existing big data to better safeguard patient safety.

In our information age, medical institutions gradually replace paper-based operations with digitalized processes. Deputy Superintendent Yang Hsu-Ti further notes that the hospital information system fully meets clinical needs and relevant development strategy requirements in the fields of automation, mobilization, and smartification as a result of ongoing upgrades over a period of almost three years. In addition to the enhancement of patient treatment safety and effectiveness, we strive to link the clinical care management information

networks of the whole hospital. In the future, our medical team will further expand the CDS (Clinical Decision Support) system and build an early warning system for critical diseases on our existing foundation to boost the quality of medical care.

Research and education are indispensable components of the operations of medical center-level hospitals. Deputy Superintendent Huang Su-Cheng emphasizes that subspecialization is an absolute necessity. In addition to the development of subspecialties, physicians are expected to pursue continuing education abroad to familiarize themselves with novel technologies and thereby facilitate the development of exclusive specialty care services by Taipei Tzu Chi Hospital. Deputy Superintendent Cheng Ching-Feng remarks that Taipei Tzu Chi Hospital has formed a Competency-Based Medical Education (CBME) Committee on its existing foundation in the field of innovation. The goal lies in the promotion of CBME assessments to realize the concept of trainee-centered education and evaluation. In addition, a General Medicine Demonstration Ward will be established in sync with these efforts to bring PGY trainees closer to clinical practices under guidance of attending physicians and thereby foster their ability to provide safe patient care after graduation. In

the research dimension, we will expand cooperation programs with external institutions to open up new possibilities in the field of innovative therapies.

Healthcare, education, and research represent core tasks of Taipei Tzu Chi Hospital. Superintendent Chao You-Cheng stresses that the mission of medical center-level hospitals encompasses emergency and critical care, innovation and originality in the fields of education

and research, offering of guidance to small- and medium-sized hospitals in the area of medical care quality, provision of referral resources, and development of international medical services to promote foreign relations. Taipei Tzu Chi Hospital will not waver in its commitment to forging ahead toward its preset goals with the ultimate goal of fulfilling its social responsibility and maximizing its positive energy in the healthcare sector.



**Taipei Tzu Chi Hospital has made a long-term commitment to offering healthcare services and volunteer medical consultations in remote townships including Shiding, Ruifang, and Pingxi and in-home treatment and care for financially challenged patients.**