

Nurses who lead by example

Veteran nurses Christopher Soh and Katherine Leong are among seven recipients of this year's President's Award for Nurses

✓ HEDY YANG

When the Covid-19 situation peaked in April last year, the emergency department at Tan Tock Seng Hospital (TTSH) stepped up and took command of operations at the National Centre for Infectious Diseases screening centre.

Leading the team of nurses is Mr Christopher Soh, assistant director of



nursing at TTSH's emergency department, who had been involved in the planning of the screening centre since 2016.

A ground nurse in 2003 during the Sars outbreak and a nurse leader during the 2009 H1N1 outbreak, Mr Soh, 44, who has been at TTSH since 2001, said his work experiences gave him the perspectives needed to deal with the pandemic using a "collective leadership"



Mr Christopher Soh, assistant director of nursing at TTSH's emergency department, and Ms Katherine Leong, assistant director of nursing at Khoo Teck Puat - National University Children's Medical Institute, received their awards from President Halimah Yacob at a virtual ceremony yesterday. PHOTOS: TTSH, NUH

approach.

Mr Soh and six other nurses received this year's President's Award for Nurses from President Halimah Yacob at a virtual award ceremony yesterday.

The highest accolade in Singapore's nursing profession recognises nurses with sustained outstanding performance and contributions to patient care delivery, education, research and administration.

Mr Soh is the sole male nurse to receive the award this year.

In 2004, despite being newly married, he volunteered as a medic in Sri Lanka after the Indian Ocean tsunami, when physically stronger male nurses were needed there.

Earlier this year, when the Covid-19 cluster at TTSH emerged, apart from reinforcing personal protective measures, he coordinated care packages and provided emotional support to affected staff.

Fellow award recipient Katherine

Leong, assistant director of nursing at Khoo Teck Puat - National University Children's Medical Institute, has been a nurse for 30 years.

She found her passion in paediatric oncology nursing, a then "unchartered territory", where she looked after children with cancer.

When the pandemic hit and the Tuas South Community Care Facility needed to be set up, Ms Leong, 50, accepted the challenge.

She led a group of 28 National University Hospital nurses and locum nurses, caring for migrant workers who had tested positive for Covid-19.

She said: "I am honoured and I appreciate the recognition, but I was just at the right place at the right time."

"I receive the award on behalf of all the nurses in Singapore, who are in this mission together."

hedyyang@sph.com.sg