

'Robot' hospital beds easier to move about

By ADRIAN LIM

IT WILL soon be easier and safer to wheel hospital beds around Khoo Teck Puat Hospital (KTPH), with the roll-out of "robot" beds which can be pushed by just one worker instead of the usual two.

The beds come with a motor to generate power, as well as a "brain" or intelligent system.

The system, called EPush, can sense the amount of strength being used to push the bed, the speed it is moving at, and the gradient of the ground. It then adjusts the amount of power to maintain a safe, regulated speed.

Singapore firm Abacus Global Technology took about three years to develop the system, and it passed evaluation tests in August. It will be added to 100 beds at KTPH over the next six months.

"It converts a 300kg bed with a

patient and everything on it, into (feeling) like 20kg when it starts moving," said Mr Ivan Khoo, the company's director of sales and marketing.

The modified beds will be a boon for older porters and nurses, said Mr Khoo.

"Patients will also be in comfort when they are not moved in a jagged motion," he added.

For its innovation, Abacus Global Technology was recognised, with 12 other companies, at the inaugural Healthcare Supplier Awards held at the Institute of Mental Health on Monday.

To be held yearly, the event is organised by the National Healthcare Group (NHG) and supported by KTPH and the National University Hospital. Ms Lim Yee Juan, NHG's group chief financial officer, said the awards are a platform to recognise and share the best practices of health-care sup-



A Khoo Teck Puat Hospital nurse wheeling a hospital bed fitted with the EPush system developed by Singapore firm Abacus Global Technology. The system, which has a motor that generates power to help move the bed, can be activated only with a hospital staff ID (right). ST PHOTOS: NG SOR LUAN

pliers in improving a hospital's operational efficiency and sustainability and cost reduction.

Other winners this year include Cadi Scientific, which has devel-

oped an automated system which provides instant electronic updates of readings of patients' vital signs. Implemented at Tan Tock Seng Hospital two years ago, it

has saved at least 140 hours of the hospital's nurses' time daily.

The Medical Device Interface system can also calculate the score of early warning signals, in-

cluding pulse rate, blood pressure and temperature, and alert health-care workers for prompt action.

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