Stepped-up collaboration with Duke University seen

THE first step was the setting up the Duke-NUS Graduate Medical School (GMS) two years ago, and now, Health Minister Khaw Boon Wan is keen to explore a broader and deeper collaboration with Duke University.

An inter-agency committee is now brainstorming on this, he said.

While the current memorandum of understanding with Duke is focused on the GMS and medical education, Mr Khaw envisions, as part of the next phase of the partnership, raising the annual intake from the current 50, and looking into further areas of clinical research.

There is also the allied healthcare field — “the training of nurses, physiotherapists, speech therapists, occupational therapists, and other areas such as healthcare management, review, research”, he said.

Speaking at the topping-up ceremony for the school building within the Singapore General Hospital grounds, Mr Khaw said the progress achieved by GMS has exceeded expectations.

The GMS has launched five research programmes, in emerging infectious diseases, cancer and stem-cell biology, as well as cardiovascular disorders.

Mr Khaw pointed out that with an excellent infrastructure in place, the transformation of the Outram Campus into a “medipolis” can be sped up.

The school is on track to open by the middle of next year; it will house some 500 researchers and students currently working out of an interim campus at Jalan Bukit Merah.

Besides state-of-the-art R&D equipment and five floors of research laboratories, it will also have a research centre for genomic study.