

EMBARGOED TILL 16 AUGUST 2013, 11.00AM

FACTSHEET

CARING ASSISTANCE FROM NEIGHBOURS (CAN) PROGRAMME

BACKGROUND

The Caring Assistance from Neighbours (CAN) programme is a joint effort by the Ministry of Social and Family Development (MSF) and the Agency for Integrated Care (AIC). The programme provides social and healthcare support to the vulnerable elderly living alone. This is achieved through empowering neighbours in the community to take on the role of a carer to the elderly. This is an integrated programme which sees MSF providing social support for the elderly such as befriending services while AIC manages the healthcare services of the programme.

The broad aims of CAN are:

- Identify, monitor and help the vulnerable elderly by providing casework management, care planning and counselling services through social work professionals working in Senior Activity Centres (Cluster Support)
- Provide healthcare support to manage the health conditions of the vulnerable elderly
- Provide more comprehensive follow-ups and to constantly monitor the health conditions of the vulnerable elderly so as to delay health deterioration
- Improve the quality of life of clients

CAN SERVICES

Through the CAN programme, each Senior Activity Centre (Cluster Support) has CAN carers to perform regular home visits to the vulnerable elderly. Such close monitoring help to ensure the seniors' overall well-being, and enable early intervention of any signs of self-neglect or health deterioration. The carers will also provide emotional support by befriending and developing supportive relationships with the vulnerable elderly.

It is also recognised that some vulnerable elderly need reminders to consume their medications or to attend their medical appointments. Hence healthcare services have been integrated with the social support provided. The healthcare services include daily visits by the carer to his/her elderly neighbour in order to:

- Remind them to take their medication
- Ensure they go for their medical appointments

The vulnerable elderly under the programme and who require healthcare support are first assessed by a Registered Nurse to develop an individualised care plan. The elderly will then be matched with a carer living within the vicinity of their home. The Registered Nurse also joins the carers on some of their visits to provide clinical expertise in caring for the elderly.

The healthcare services of the CAN programme are currently available in Taman Jurong, supported by NTUC-Taman Jurong Senior Activity Centre, and in Bukit Merah, supported by Thye Hua Kwan Moral Charities-Senior Homecare.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA AND HOW TO APPLY

Carers

Anyone who is interested to make a difference to the lives of their elderly neighbours and can make a full-time commitment to make regular or daily visits to the home of their elderly charges is invited to sign-up for the CAN programme.

Training will be provided to the carer to ensure he or she is equipped with the right knowledge to deliver the best care to their elderly charges. Training topics include:

- Communicating effectively with the elderly
- How to conduct simple assessments on their elderly charges (e.g. identifying basic signs of dementia)
- How to monitor and support the overall well-being of their elderly charges (e.g. how to use basic mobility devices)

If the carer wishes to provide the healthcare services, he or she will also be trained on the following areas:

- Safe medication consumption practices
- Medication and medical appointment reminders

The training is provided and conducted by the Social Service Institute and in-house training by the service providers supporting the CAN programme.

Elderly charges

To be eligible for the CAN programme, the elderly resident:

- Must be 60-years old and above
- Must stay alone or have a caregiver who is facing difficulties managing the seniors' medications
- Must require assistance with either self-care issues due to ADL limitations or is in need of emotional support

If the elderly resident requires the healthcare services, he or she must also:

- Have a diagnosed chronic condition such as diabetes or hypertension
- Require daily visits from the carer to ensure their medication is taken and medical appointments are met
- Require accompaniment for transport pick-up and drop-off