



MINISTRY OF HEALTH
SINGAPORE

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**Speech by Dr Amy Khor, Minister of State for Health and Manpower,
at the Official Launch of Singapore Silver Pages (SSP) v2.0, 28 July 2013,
at the iCare Carnival 2013**

Ms Low Yen Ling,
Advisor, Bukit Gombak constituency

Dr Jason Cheah,
Chief Executive Officer, Agency for Integrated Care

Grassroots Leaders

Residents

Ladies and gentlemen

Good morning. I am very happy to see all of you here this morning. I would like to thank AIC, and the Southwest CDC team, for co-organising this iCare Carnival to raise awareness about community care services for seniors and their families.

2. This carnival is very timely. As Singapore as a whole age rapidly over the next one to two decades, many of us here will be caregivers, to our spouses, elderly parents or grandparents. To ensure that our elderly population is well cared for and supported as they age, we need to, in turn, better support all our caregivers.



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3. Caregiver support is a key objective of the Ministerial Committee on Ageing. The government aims to enhance caregiver support in three key areas.

4. First, is to enhance the range of aged care services that caregivers can tap on to help them balance their caregiving duties, their work and other family commitments. Should caregivers want to care for their loved ones at home as long as possible, help is available to ensure that they do not have to manage this responsibility alone, and are supported every step of the way. Even homebound, frail elderly can be cared for at home if they so choose, with the support of home care services that provide regular nursing and medical care inside their homes, meal deliveries, escort for medical appointments, and even ensuite services such as housekeeping and laundry support. The Government is currently ramping up these aged care services to meet increased needs, with the addition of 750 new home care places last year.

5. For working caregivers, there are various care options they can turn to for support in caring for their loved ones during the day, depending on their care needs. Social Day Care Centres provide full or half-day programmes with meals provided, maintenance exercise programmes, and social and recreational activities, while for those whose loved ones are very frail, there is the Programme for Integrated Care for the Elderly, also known as SPICE, which is an integrated centre- and home-based programme that provides health, nursing, personal care, and rehabilitation services. This means that even caregivers who have other commitments can have the confidence to support their loved ones in continuing to live at home, and have the reassurance that their loved ones will still be receiving good care in their absence.

6. In addition, the engagement of domestic help and the use of respite care can also go a long way in sharing and relieving the caregiver's responsibilities. For families who need to hire a domestic helper to assist them with caregiving, we provide the Foreign Domestic Worker Grant, which helps to offset the cost of hiring domestic help. So far, there have been over 3,000 successful applications.



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And caregivers who require some temporary relief can consider the Nursing Home Respite Care programme, which was launched in May this year. It allows caregivers a temporary break if needed, while their loved ones receive quality, professional care in a nursing home for up to 30 days.

7. There are also financial assistance schemes that relieve the cost of caregiving at home. Loved ones and family members of caregivers who meet the criteria can tap on the Seniors' Mobility and Enabling Fund to purchase assistive aids, offset their transport costs if they attend day rehab, dementia day care and renal dialysis centres, and receive subsidies for consumables such as dressings, diapers, and milk feeds.

8. The second key area is to provide caregivers with the right training when they need it. Most caregivers lack formal training in looking after the elderly with their daily activities, but there are courses they can attend to acquire these skills. The Caregivers' Training Grant can be used to subsidise courses offered by AIC's pre-approved training providers, which are either home-based or classroom-based. More than 10,000 caregivers have tapped on this training Grant since its inception in 2009. In fact, last year saw the highest take up of 7,000 successful applications.

9. Thirdly, we aim to provide caregivers assistance to know what help there is and how to seek such help. AIC has published useful resources for new caregivers, such as basic caregiving guides, caregiving 'how-to's on topics like avoiding caregiver burnout and information on available caregiver support services and schemes. These are currently distributed via community touch points including Restructured Hospitals, Community Clubs, grassroots leaders and volunteers, General Practitioners, and at outreach events. The resources are also available at AIC's Eldercare Info Corners, now sited at 30 locations islandwide. And for caregivers who prefer to talk to someone in person about care needs, they can visit AIC@City Square Mall to obtain relevant information, be referred to appropriate services, apply for aged care services provided by service partners, and buy assistive devices, social care and lifestyle products.



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10. We should also tap on digital platforms and applications to share these resources with an increasingly IT-savvy audience. Today, AIC is launching the second version of the **Singapore Silver Pages, or SSP**, to meet that need for information support. With the integration of Centre for Enabled Living (CEL)'s aged care function with AIC's in April this year, caregivers now need only approach one agency – AIC – for easy access to both health and social services for their loved ones. SSP v2.0 is the first of many ways that AIC offers for a holistic approach to eldercare. The portal is “one-stop” to provide both **health and social care information** that caters to both **caregivers** and **seniors**, and the first to achieve the integration of all these four elements.

Singapore Silver Pages v2.0 (SSP v2.0)

11. The SSP was first developed in 2011 as an online information portal to help Singaporeans make informed eldercare choices. It empowers the elderly, their family members and caregivers with information and resources to help them make well-informed decisions about eldercare needs, and provides an effective way for them to access this quickly and conveniently.

Since 2011, visitorship of the portal has more than tripled. Today it attracts about 40,000 visitors monthly.

12. The significant enhancements made to SSP v2.0 are that it now brings together social and health information, and offers substantially enhanced resources for caregivers. We recognize that being a caregiver can be stressful, and that providing care for an elderly loved one may take a toll on the physical and emotional health of caregiver. Hence, SSP is now the place to find extensive resources on the caregiving journey: what it entails, and the types of programmes and services available to support caregiving. In particular, those who are new to caregiving can better prepare themselves by finding out about their roles and expectations of them as a caregiver. There are tips to guide them on how to work with healthcare



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professionals to provide better care for their elderly loved ones, care guides and templates for them to record their care recipients' medical history and profiles, as well as cost information for various care options to enable caregivers and family members to plan and budget ahead.

13. Also, I found it interesting that the enhanced version of the SSP v2.0 has built in some additional senior-friendly features that take its audience into consideration, such as the Readspeaker application, which reads aloud articles on the website, and adjustable font sizes for better readability by all ages.

Conclusion

14. With all these enhancements introduced, whether you are a caregiver or not, I want to encourage all Singaporeans to visit SSP v2.0. There are schemes, services and resources available to support you and your loved ones.

15. For all the Southwest CDC residents present, whether you are future caregivers, current caregivers or seniors, today is yet another opportunity for you to learn more about active ageing, healthy eating, keeping fit through exercise, adopting a positive mindset and lifestyle, being smoke-free and maintaining a clean environment.

These are Southwest CDC's health goals for our residents, and you can find out more at the Southwest CDC corner. Once again, I would like to thank AIC for partnering Southwest CDC to organise this iCare Carnival. I hope you will enjoy the fun activities and sharing sessions organised for you. Have a pleasant Sunday!



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