

MEDIA RELEASE

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Fall Prevention Programme Combines Exercise and Education to Help Seniors Prevent Falls - Pilot initiative to strengthen seniors' balance & fitness and raise awareness on fall prevention -

Singapore, 19 November 2018 – With close to 70% of falls in seniors happening within their households, Ren Ci Hospital pilots a community engagement initiative that marries physical exercise and education to help seniors aged 65 and above prevent and address risk factors of falls early.

A collaboration with Teck Ghee Zone A Residents' Committee (RC) and conducted by the team of therapists from the Senior Care Centre at Ren Ci Ang Mo Kio Nursing Home, the programme which comprises initial assessment, 11 sessions of therapist-led exercises & education, and a post-programme outcome measurement, is set to benefit elderly residents in Ang Mo Kio by raising their awareness on fall prevention.

"Falls among the elderly are mostly caused by health conditions and gradual physical changes in muscle strength and balance due to ageing. We believe that engaging in exercises that improve strength, balance, and fitness is important for seniors to stay active, independent, and reduce the chances of having a fall," said Ng Lip Chin, Ren Ci's Head of Rehabilitation.

The exercise component in this fall prevention programme is tailored from other evidence-based and successful exercise regimes like the Otago exercise programme (New Zealand), Stepping On (Australia) and the SAIL programme (USA), focusing on strength, balance and cardiovascular fitness.

As we promote seniors to age in the community, it is important that they are equipped with the knowledge on how to identify fall hazards especially at home or in the event of falls, the seniors can adopt the right recovery techniques to minimise complications and optimise post-fall outcomes. The educational component will cover topics like identifying fall hazards within the home and in the community as well as understanding factors that increase risk of falls.

"Knowing that most seniors have issues of either frequent falls or fear of falls, we hope to strengthen the seniors' physical condition through our customised programme in order to help them mitigate potential falls, raise their knowledge on falls prevention and empower them to make appropriate decisions in their daily activities to prevent falls," explained Mr Joe Hau, Chief Executive Officer of Ren Ci Hospital.

Through regular house visits, the Teck Ghee Zone A RC has been working with Ren Ci Hospital to identify seniors in the area aged above 65 without any history of falls, or those under 65 with a history of falls. Launched on 1 November 2018, the pilot programme has seen 11 beneficiaries so far. This pioneer batch of seniors, mostly residing near Ren Ci @ Ang Mo Kio Nursing Home, is committed to 8 weeks, twice weekly one-hour session. They are supported by community volunteers from Teck Ghee Zone A RC. The programme will expand to include caregivers looking after seniors prone to falls so as to address risk factors of falls and prevent them as much as possible.

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About Ren Ci Hospital

Established since 1994, Ren Ci Hospital is one of the few charity healthcare institutions in Singapore to provide high quality and affordable medical, nursing and rehabilitative care services for the community, based on the principles of loving kindness and compassion. Ren Ci plays an integral role in supporting the healthcare needs of the elderly through adopting holistic way of delivering person-centred care.

Besides giving hope to the frail elderly by helping overcome their disabilities and teaching their families to care for them at home, Ren Ci also partners various community groups and social enterprises to give dignity back to the elderly.