



## **ASSISI HOSPICE AND TEMASEK FOUNDATION CARES ESTABLISH SINGAPORE'S FIRST INPATIENT DEMENTIA AND PAEDIATRIC HOSPICE PROGRAMMES**

*First of its kind care model that provides personalised care for individuals in the designated dementia and paediatric hospice wards*

**12 April 2017:** Assisi Hospice and Temasek Foundation Cares announced today the first ever inpatient dementia and paediatric hospice programmes in Singapore. Based in Assisi Hospice, the two pilot programmes will feature new models of inpatient palliative care of advanced dementia patients and critically-ill children.

2 Prior to these programmes, there was no individualised inpatient care catering to persons with dementia or children with life-threatening conditions. Both these groups have specific needs that may not be met in a general palliative ward. The new inpatient dementia and paediatric programmes will offer person-centred care, tailored to the needs and preferences of the patients and their family.

### *Dementia Hospice Care Programme*

3 Dementia patients typically have progressive physical and cognitive decline, characterised by issues like memory loss, mood or behavioral changes as well as having difficulties communicating their needs and feelings. Under the programme, patients with advanced dementia will receive specialised care to manage their unique symptoms, for instance, better control and management of pain or discomfort. A multi-disciplinary team of experts including palliative and geriatric dementia care specialists, nursing team, physiotherapists as well as art, music and speech therapists will attend to the medical, health and psychosocial care (including spiritual needs) of the patient.

4 There are also activities for mental stimulation, with reminiscence sessions to help patients with memory recall; staff are also trained to be more attuned to verbal and non-verbal cues in understanding patients' needs. A sensory garden next to the ward provides space for patients to engage with nature and ignite their senses. The spaces within the ward are also conducive for caregivers to befriend one another and provide mutual support through various opportunities for social interaction and group therapy.

5 Many patients and their families have difficulty making decisions in a palliative care environment. Their expectations and hopes for the delivery of treatment may at times conflict with what the patient truly desires. The new programme will help patients and their families with caregiving and end-of-life-care planning to arrive at a care plan consistent with their personal values and ultimately, providing the patients with a good quality of life.

### *Paediatric Hospice Care Programme*

6 Children with life-limiting medical conditions like cancer, blood disorders, congenital malformations or organ failures requiring regular access to specialised paediatric care and

equipment, can now turn to the programme's inpatient care service instead of staying in an acute care institution.

7 The new model of care will address the challenges arising from the broad spectrum of illnesses, requiring different medical and nursing expertise, as well as the needs of the patient, his/her family and siblings through a multi-disciplinary team trained in paediatric care. There will also be a higher nurse-to-patient ratio due to the high care needs of these children.

8 The paediatric ward is designed with more space in each single room to accommodate overnight stays for parents. The ward space also includes a playroom and a playground to encourage bonding between siblings. These facility features enable young patients and their caregivers to be cared for holistically as a family unit in a home-like environment.

9 Under the new care model, families of these children will also receive structured caregiver and bereavement support. The stepped-up support will include caregiver respite services, caregiver burden assessment and education.

10 On the need for such specialised programmes, Ms Choo Shiu Ling, CEO of Assisi Hospice said that the mission is to provide compassionate person-centred care that is specific to the needs of patients and caregivers, in a life-affirming environment that is conducive to their well-being and sense of dignity.

11 "Advanced dementia and life threatening conditions impact patients and their caregivers more significantly as they not only deal with disease symptoms, but also the loss of personhood, life aspirations of the patient and cherished interactions with the family. These create additional burdens for the family. It is hoped that through our person-centred programmes with activities designed for every patient and their families, we are able to provide holistic care and improve quality of life for the whole family in a care space dedicated for them."

12 Mr Richard Magnus, Chairman, Temasek Foundation Cares, said, "The Dementia and Paediatric Hospice Care programmes are pilot initiatives funded by Temasek Foundation Cares within our larger concern for a similar need in the community. We are taking the lead to pilot new models of end-of-life support care for both the young and old in situations where medical intervention has reached its limitation and the end is inevitable."

13 He added, "With Singapore's ageing population, Temasek Foundation Cares sees a need to enhance end-of-life care in a more holistic approach. We intend to develop structured palliative care pathways for other terminal illnesses as well as caregiver programmes in grief therapy and bereavement counselling."

14 Temasek Foundation Cares has committed \$1.6 million for the dementia hospice care programme and \$1.1 million for the paediatric hospice care programme. The programmes will be piloted over a two- and three-year period respectively.

### **Beneficiary Testimony**

Mr Kwan Thim Kit was able to have a balanced lifestyle after caring for his mother, Mdm Chan Lim Seng, aged 92 years old for seven years. He said: "The music therapy kept my mother active and mentally engaged; and in another therapy session where she made cookies, she was reminded of her cooking skills. With the professional inpatient services to take care of my mother's medical and psychosocial needs, I am able to enjoy some personal time and spend more quality time with my mother."

## **ASSISI HOSPICE**

Assisi Hospice provides palliative care for patients and families that preserves their dignity and quality of life. Patients of any race, faith and financial position are cared for by our team of specialist doctors, nurses, allied health and pastoral care professionals. When faced with life limiting illnesses, our patients receive medical care, as well as psychosocial, emotional and spiritual care.

Assisi Hospice provides care for patients across the continuum of Home Care, Inpatient and Day Care. This allows patients and family members to journey with a clinical team they are familiar with, and to receive care in the way that they need.

In January 2017, we moved to our new six-storey purpose built hospice which has a homely ambience, and is designed to provide a lot of natural light and contact with nature. With the many cosy quiet spaces and comfortable furnishing, we hope to provide comfort and dignity for patients and loved ones in a life-affirming space. With a doubled capacity for Home Care and Day Care, 85 Inpatient beds, new wards for Dementia Palliative Care and Pediatric Palliative care, a Sensory Garden, Chapel and Roof Terrace, we will serve more than 2,000 patients a year.

We are supported by donors, volunteers and corporate organisations who journey with us in our cause. Through meaningful engagements with them and providence, we are able to serve our community of patients and families with love and compassion.

## **Temasek Foundation Cares**

About Temasek Foundation Cares Temasek Foundation Cares is a Singapore-based non-profit philanthropic organisation that funds and supports meaningful and innovative community-based programmes for the benefit of Singaporeans. It aims to contribute to the well-being, dignity and livelihood of needy individuals, families and communities by building people, building communities, building capabilities and rebuilding lives. Temasek Foundation Cares is a member of the Temasek Philanthropic Platform.

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