




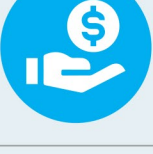
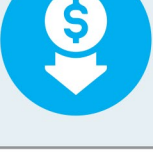







# Health for life



A slew of new programmes and changes was announced by the Ministry of Health yesterday to keep people healthier longer, and help them cope with illness better. **Rei Kurohi** summarises the key initiatives and when you can expect them.

	WHAT	WHEN
<b>STRIVING FOR BETTER HEALTH FOR ALL</b>	 An inter-agency task force has been set up to develop a five-year Child and Maternal Health and Well-being action plan, aimed at helping women prepare for motherhood, and helping children attain good health and well-being from their early years.	The task force will implement the plan in phases, with the first phase expected to be ready by early next year.
	 An updated Action Plan for Successful Ageing will be launched to improve seniors' quality of life, empower them to continue contributing to society, and support them in staying connected to the community.	The Government will launch the plan next year.
	 A work group has been set up to improve the health of ethnic minority groups in Singapore. It will design programmes to rally the respective communities against poor health habits.	The group was formed last month and will start by focusing its efforts on the Malay community.
	 The Covid-19 mental health task force, which was set up in October last year, will be transformed into an inter-agency platform to coordinate mental health and well-being efforts beyond the pandemic.	The task force is to be transformed by the middle of this year, and more details will be shared when ready.
	 Clementi Polyclinic, one of the oldest polyclinics in Singapore, will be redeveloped at a new site. When it is ready, it will be more spacious and will incorporate more elder-friendly and accessibility features.	The redeveloped polyclinic is expected to be operational by 2027. In the meantime, the existing Clementi Polyclinic will continue to serve patients.
<b>PROVIDING ACCESSIBLE, AFFORDABLE AND BETTER CARE</b>	 Government subsidy schemes for acute inpatient hospitals, community hospitals and specialist outpatient clinics will be revamped to better target those who need them more.	The schemes will be updated by mid-2022.
	 Annual withdrawal limits for the Flexi-MediSave scheme, which aims to help seniors pay less for healthcare out of pocket, will be raised from \$200 to \$300 to support elderly patients seeking outpatient treatment.	The change will take effect on June 1 this year.
	 A national One-Rehab framework will give patients better access to rehabilitation care, particularly in the community setting.	The framework will be progressively piloted in public hospitals, polyclinics and the community care sector from the second half of this year.
<b>IMPROVING QUALITY OF CARE</b>	 Two National Central Fill Pharmacies will be set up to consolidate medication orders from multiple public healthcare institutions, which will be sent to patients in a single parcel.	The first phase is targeted to start early next year.
	 The training capacity of the professional conversion programme (PCP) for healthcare professionals will be expanded to bring in more mid-career entrants, especially for nursing.	Applications for the nursing PCP at Nanyang Polytechnic and Ngee Ann Polytechnic will open next month, for the October intake. Applications for an accelerated PCP in occupational therapy at the Singapore Institute of Technology are open from now until March 19 this year.
<b>ENABLING A FUTURE-READY HEALTHCARE SYSTEM</b>	 Base salaries for nurses, allied health professionals, pharmacists, and administrative and ancillary staff in the public healthcare sector will be raised to attract and retain more healthcare staff. Publicly funded community care organisations will also get funding support for raising salaries.	The adjustments will be implemented in phases over two years, starting from July this year.
	 Support roles in the healthcare sector are being redesigned to blend clinical support, administrative and operations responsibilities, and new career pathways with more developmental opportunities to allow individuals to grow throughout their careers will be created.	The process is ongoing.