

## More training places, learning institutes for community care staff



The scheme provides training support and opportunities to new entrants and current staff in the community care sector. ST PHOTO: KELVIN CHNG



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SINGAPORE - In a bid to help the community care workforce stay relevant amid [the Covid-19 pandemic](#), the number of training places offered will increase by 20 per cent, to provide them with greater access to opportunities.

The Agency for Integrated Care (AIC) will appoint two additional learning institutes - Alzheimer's Disease Association and Tan Tock Seng Hospital - to the AIC Learning Network from January next year, said Senior Minister of State for Health Koh Poh Koon.

With the addition, the network will have eight learning institutes providing about 11,000 training places yearly for the next four years.

"In a time of change, the community care workforce needs to be future-ready. Every community care staff will need to be open to continuous learning and skills-upgrading so that you remain equipped with relevant skills to care for our seniors."

Dr Koh was speaking on Friday morning (Oct 16) at a virtual awards ceremony where about 100 individuals were awarded the Community Care Manpower Development Awards (CCMDA).

The scheme provides training support and opportunities to new entrants and current staff in the community care sector.

Recipients of the awards will be able to attend various training programmes for free. They will be co-funded by CCMDA and their hiring community care providers.

CCMDA will also provide funding for providers to hire temporary staff to cover the duties of a staff member pursuing a full-time course.

The scheme covers all levels of skills upgrading, from the National Institute of Technical Education Certificate (Nitec), to master's degrees in a range of clinical and non-clinical areas.

Professional development courses and attachments to local or overseas healthcare and community care facilities are also covered.

Recipients will have to fulfil a bond with their hiring community care providers upon graduation.

The AIC said the awards "aim to enable these individuals to develop and upgrade themselves professionally, so as to make a deeper impact to seniors to help them live and age gracefully in the community".

Dr Koh cited the example of Mr Dennis Oen, a programme manager at Thye Hua Kwan Moral Charities. Mr Oen, who was an operations manager at his family business, made a mid-career switch into the community care sector in 2018.

He took up a course on providing service excellence in healthcare under the AIC Learning Network that year, and has since gone on to pursue a part-time master's programme in gerontology, which deals with ageing issues, at the Singapore University of Social Sciences under CCMDA.

Said Dr Koh: "As the community care sector transforms, I encourage you to continue to learn, and muster the courage to step outside your comfort zone so that you can keep pace with a rapidly evolving community care landscape and continue to deliver good care to our seniors."

Since the CCMDA was launched in 2017, over 380 awards have been given out. The majority of recipients are current staff in the community care sector.

About 15 per cent of recipients are new entrants to the sector and they are enrolled in a range of courses such as nursing, physiotherapy as well as occupational therapy.