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## **HEALTH PROMOTION BOARD, SOUTH EAST MOSQUE CLUSTER AND GELYANG SERAI CC LAUNCH MALAY VERSION OF POPULAR MENTAL WELLBEING PROGRAMME TO REDUCE THE RISK OF DEMENTIA AMONG THE MALAY ELDERLY**

***This partnership among HPB, South East Mosque Cluster and Geylang Serai CC empowers the Malay community, as Malay residents reach out to one another and help each other***

The Health Promotion Board (HPB) is partnering the South East Mosque Cluster and Geylang Serai CC to conduct a mental wellbeing programme in Malay, so as to better address the mental wellbeing of the Malay elderly.

2. It is estimated that about 28,000 seniors aged 60 and above live with dementia in Singapore currently, and this number is expected to increase to 50,000 by 2020.
3. At the same time, a survey conducted by HPB revealed that the awareness level of the signs of dementia is relatively lower among the Malay residents in comparison to others.
4. In order to raise awareness of the importance of mental wellbeing and reduce the risk of dementia among the Malay community, HPB is working with mosques and the Geylang Serai CC to launch the Malay version of its popular Nurture Your Mind programme.
5. “The prevalence of dementia among Malays aged 60 years and above stands at 9.4 per cent, higher than the population prevalence of 5.2 per cent, and highest among the major ethnic communities. This partnership with HPB will empower the Malay community, as we reach out to each other and help one another. Conducting HPB’s mental wellbeing programme in Malay and

within a mosque will encourage more elderly Malays to enrol in the programme, since it is conducted in a language and setting the seniors are comfortable with,” said Associate Professor Fatimah Lateef, Grassroots Adviser for Geylang Serai and Member of Parliament for Marine Parade GRC. A medical specialist with a keen interest in the area of dementia, she has played a key role in bringing about this programme, and will be delivering a keynote lecture at the launch.

6. “It is important that we let our seniors know that dementia is not part of normal ageing, and teach them the various ways to stay mentally active. Working through the South East Mosque Cluster and Geylang Serai CC puts HPB on the right track as it enables us to reach out effectively to Malay seniors and caregivers, who may not be aware of the warning signs of dementia and the ways to reduce its risks. In addition to bringing the Nurture Your Mind programme to the mosques, HPB is also helping Malay residents build a healthy Malay community through initiatives and programmes. These include setting up a Healthy Lifestyle Corner in mosques where people can visit to learn about health issues or participate in health programmes. HPB will also train mosque volunteers to be Health Ambassadors, who will be an integral part of the Healthy Lifestyle Corner as they interact with mosque goers, promote a healthy lifestyle, provide basic health advice and facilitate health promoting programmes such as healthy supermarket trails and cooking classes to teach Malays to cook traditional Malay cuisine using healthier ingredients,” said Mr Ang Hak Seng, Chief Executive Officer, HPB.

7. HPB is currently working with the South East Mosque Cluster and Geylang Serai CC to offer the Nurture Your Mind programme at their premises. By 2013, HPB aims to work with the 13 mosques and get a thousand Malay seniors living in the South East district to enrol in the Malay-language Nurture Your Mind programme.

8. During the eight-week programme, participants will learn tips to improve mental wellbeing, as well as an understanding of dementia and depression through a series of activity-based workshops. As studies have shown that participating in cognitive leisure activities and games may lead to a reduced risk of dementia, the programme comprises three interactive workshops and four mentally stimulating games such as:

- **Print me on Memory Lane! - Understanding Mental Wellbeing**

Participants will be introduced to the concept of mental wellbeing and the importance of resilience. Using unique modalities, fingerprint art is used to engage the seniors in reminiscing and revisiting their childhood or teenage memories. This activity encourages senior participants to renew interest in past hobbies and re-live past times, thereby increasing their sense of worth and providing them with a sense of achievement.

- **Mental-thon! - Dementia Prevention via stimulating the Mind**

Participants will learn about the risk factors of dementia and how mental deterioration may affect the elderly. Various forms of challenging mental stimulation activities that require memory recall will be used in the workshop. Simple tips on improving memory and problem-solving will be shared.

- **Know You, Know Me! - Building Positive Relationships**

Participants will be equipped with ways to enhance their interpersonal skills through role-playing and a group skit. They will learn how to build positive relationships with those around them, for a richer and fulfilling life.

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