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## **ONE-STOP FUNCTIONAL SCREENING PROVEN FOUR TIMES MORE EFFECTIVE**

*Health Promotion Board's one-stop screening programme for age-related functional decline improves post-screening follow-up rate from 25% to 90%*

**Singapore, 31 March 2012:** Give our senior citizens convenient and affordable access to healthcare professionals and few will skip a doctor's appointment.

2. This was what the Health Promotion Board (HPB) found out when the post-screening follow-up rate jumped almost fourfold to reach 90 per cent after consultation and management were provided immediately on-site to participants detected with age-related functional decline at its functional screening programme.

3. Out of the 100 seniors aged 60 and above who were screened for age-related functional decline at Hong Kah North on 4 December last year, about 90 needed follow-up and were referred to the network of doctors (GPs), dentists, optometrists and counsellors present at the screening venue – and 80, or about 90 per cent, received the checkups and care they needed on-site.

4. In contrast, when on-site follow-up services were not provided, approximately three out of four seniors who needed follow-up did not visit their GP or other healthcare providers for further checks.

5. Said Mr Ang Hak Seng, Chief Executive Officer, HPB, "It definitely worried me that a number of seniors detected with functional decline and other health-related risk factors skipped their follow-up medical appointments after getting screened. This is likely to be due to the perceived inconvenience, costs and even fear associated

with visits to the doctor. It is also worrying that our surveys show one out of five Singaporean seniors does not know they have hypertension and two out of five, or about 40 per cent, do not realise they could be diabetic, simply because many of these diseases are often 'silent', giving no pain or symptoms until it is too late."

6. To counter a lacklustre follow-up rate after health screening, HPB introduced the one-stop screening concept last year. In December 2011, HPB rolled out the first health screening for age-related functional decline with on-site follow-up at Hong Kah North.

7. HPB is now taking its integrated screening programme one step further, by streamlining the screening for functional decline and that for chronic diseases and cancers into one, so as to give seniors a one-stop platform to access the full range of recommended health screening conveniently and affordably.

8. This enhanced screening programme brings together three key components:

- Health screening to detect chronic conditions (diabetes, high blood pressure, high blood cholesterol and obesity) and the more common cancers (breast, cervical and colorectal)
- Health screening to detect age-related functional decline (in the areas of vision, hearing, physical function, oral health, mood and urinary continence)
- On-site follow-up by healthcare professionals (GPs, dentists, optometrists, counsellors)

9. Said Mr Ang, "I would like to describe this latest 3-in-1 integrated screening as 'Health Screening v3.0'. HPB started with health screening for chronic diseases that referred participants to GPs after the screening. Then we introduced on-site follow-up after screening for functional decline. To encourage even more seniors to go for regular health screenings, and live independent and engaged lives through proper health management, we have taken our health screening a step further, by streamlining the two screening processes so they take about two hours on a single day instead of four hours over two separate days. We have also incorporated interactive exhibition booths at the screening site to boost the health literacy of

residents in an entertaining way. Furthermore, to assuage any fears associated with health screening, we have enlisted the help of our Health Ambassadors, who will be on-site to engage with the residents and lend a personal touch to the health screening experience.”

10. In addition to halving the travelling, waiting and screening time, Mr Ang also said that the more efficient and productive one-piece-flow screening process has resulted in lower costs for set-up, registration and administration. Such savings is passed to the seniors by keeping the cost of this 3-in-1 screening programme at \$5, which is less than the \$7 seniors had to pay previously to be screened for chronic diseases (\$2) and functional decline (\$5) separately.

11. “For the needy elderly who cannot afford to pay \$5, HPB will work with the community and grassroots organisations to provide further assistance,” Mr Ang added.

12. Marine Parade is a fitting place to kick-start this initiative. About a quarter of residents here are more than 65 years old. The Marine Parade Elderly Needs Survey 2011 also reported that nearly 80 per cent of seniors in Marine Parade have at least one chronic disease, less than half exercise, about 15 per cent reported falls over a 12-month period, and a number are unaware of the different types of health and social care services available.

13. Beyond this 3-in-1 enhanced screening exercise, HPB’s holistic intervention plan for seniors in Marine Parade include initiatives such as the:

- Nurse Educator Programme  
Chronic disease management talks and tailored workshops to empower residents with chronic diseases to better manage their conditions
- Health Ambassador Programme  
Volunteers and grassroots leaders equipped with knowledge and skills to better encourage peers to manage and improve their health
- Healthcare Networks

General practitioners, dentists and allied health professionals (such as optometrists and counsellors) within the community come on board to offer timely and accessible follow-up after health screening

- **STEP (Strength Training Exercise Programme)**

A 12-week structured group exercise programme for seniors with decline in physical function to improve strength and balance in order to prevent falls. This also includes educational talks and workshops as well.

- **Healthy Lifestyle Corner**

One-stop hub providing easy access to health-related information and resources, where Health Ambassadors encourage residents to get involved in various healthy activities and help in raising awareness about health-related policies and schemes such as the Community Health Assist Scheme (CHAS).

14. By 2015, HPB aims to roll out its 3-in-1 enhanced screening programme to the rest of Singapore.

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