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## **ACTIVE SENIORS AIM FOR A FULFILLING AND HEALTHY LIFE**

### ***The Senior Health Ambassador Programme, a new initiative to engage active participation of healthy seniors in the community***

Singapore has a rapidly ageing population. It is estimated that one in every five residents will be over the age of 65 by 2030, a marked increase from the current figure of one in 11 today<sup>1</sup>. Older adults in Singapore can remain healthy and carry out their day-to-day activities for as long as possible if they take steps to maintain their physical well-being, keep their minds healthy and active, go for regular health screening and learn to manage chronic conditions well.

2 Underscoring the importance of healthy ageing, Mr Ang Hak Seng, Chief Executive Officer, Health Promotion Board (HPB) said, "HPB believes that the best champions for healthy ageing are the seniors themselves and we have specially developed a new programme for active and healthy seniors to take on the role of Senior Health Ambassadors. Our Senior Health Ambassador Programme will help us build a strong community of Singapore residents who advocate healthy ageing and inspire others to lead healthy and active lives."

3 The Senior Health Ambassador Programme (SHAP) is a key initiative of the overarching Holistic Healthy Ageing Programme (HHAP), which aims to achieve a community of older persons empowered to age healthily by attaining their best possible

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<sup>1</sup> Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports. Report on the ageing population. [Online]. 2006 [cited 2010 Mar 20]. Available at: URL: [http://www.mcys.gov.sg/successful\\_ageing/report/Executive%20Summary.pdf](http://www.mcys.gov.sg/successful_ageing/report/Executive%20Summary.pdf)

health status. HHAP adopts a holistic and person-centric approach to promote healthy ageing by bringing together various aspects of healthy lifestyle and preventive health.

4 To achieve this, SHAP, a peer mentoring programme, engages and empowers older persons with knowledge and skills to maintain and improve their own health and that of their peers. Senior Health Ambassadors will undergo a training programme which comprises modules on healthy ageing, communication, facilitation and mentoring. Upon completion of the training programme, Senior Health Ambassadors will reach out to their network of peers through community engagement initiatives such as workshops, talks, exercise classes, sharing sessions, road-shows and one-on-one health chat sessions to share health tips and refer health programmes and services to their peers.

5 SHAP is targeted at individuals aged 40 years and above, and will be carried out in the community. One of the recruitment channels for the Senior Health Ambassadors will be via the National Wellness Programme, where ambassadors will be trained and then return to their communities to create health interest groups. Starting out with an initial core group of about 100 seniors, the aim is to grow membership to 300 persons by end 2011. All SHAP participants will undergo a structured programme of recruitment, induction, training and assessment.

6 Various strategic partners have come on board in support of the SHAP. They include the Tsao Foundation, Council for Third Age (C3A), People's Association (PA), NTUC U Live, National Library Board (NLB), Singapore Action Group of Elders (SAGE) and Women's Initiative for Ageing Successfully (WINGS). Through SHAP, HPB will work closely with these partners towards building communities of active and healthy seniors.

**Senior Health Ambassador Programme**

The Senior Health Ambassador Programme (SHAP) is a key initiative under the Holistic Healthy Ageing Programme (HHAP) by the Health Promotion Board (HPB). By adopting a peer mentoring approach, SHAP engages older persons as volunteers and empowers them to age healthily by improving and maintaining their physical and mental well-being, functional health and that of their peers.

2 Senior Health Ambassadors will be trained and equipped with knowledge and skills on healthy ageing related topics, communication and mentoring. Senior Health Ambassadors will then reach out to their respective networks to mentor and empower their peers through a series of engagement initiatives such as workshops, talks, exercise classes, sharing sessions, road-shows and one-to-one health discussion sessions.

3 The objectives of SHAP are to:

- Engage older persons as volunteers (Senior Health Ambassadors) and equip them with knowledge and skills to maintain and improve their own health and that of their peers;
- Empower Senior Health Ambassadors with soft skills (such as communication and counselling skills) so that they are able to effectively mentor their peers on issues relating to healthy ageing;
- Allow Senior Health Ambassadors to act as referral points for health information, programmes, and services;
- Create a supportive network of older persons who advocate healthy ageing within their communities.

4 This programme is targeted at individuals aged 40 years and above. The programme will be implemented mainly in community settings. Participants of the programme will go through the following stages:

- a) Recruitment
- b) Induction
- c) Training
- d) Assessment & Profiling
- e) Engagement
- f) Retention

5 Collaborating partners are Tsao Foundation, Council for Third Age (C3A), People's Association (PA), NTUC U Live, National Library Board (NLB), Singapore Action Group of Elders (SAGE) and Women's Initiative for Ageing Successfully (WINGS).

6 Persons interested to become a Senior Health Ambassador may write in at:  
[hpb\\_healthy\\_ageing@hpb.gov.sg](mailto:hpb_healthy_ageing@hpb.gov.sg)