

Financing Long-Term Care is Next Step after MediShield Life's Implementation: Analyst

Healthcare analyst Dr Phua Kai Hong said that while the focus has been on medical care in the hospital setting, prevention and other alternatives to hospital care should also be examined.

Olivia Siong

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Singapore: As the new national health insurance scheme MediShield Life is set to be implemented next year, the next step is to look into financing long-term care, said healthcare analyst Dr Phua Kai Hong.

Speaking on Friday (Nov 28) at a workshop discussing the situation of the middle-class in Singapore, Dr Phua said that while the focus has been on medical care in the hospital setting, prevention and other alternatives to hospital care should also be examined.

He said the need for intermediate and long-term care could arise when a patient is discharged and returns to the community. And that one of the issues is raising the standard and quality of care, particularly in the private setting.

Said Dr Phua: "Most middle-income families in Singapore would have a maid. However, the question is whether the maid is trained to have the skills to take care of the elderly parents at home.

"So we have to raise the standard and quality of care. So in the institutions, hospitals and nursing homes, we can do that. But in the privacy of the homes, in the community setting, how do you do that?" he asked.

He said: "If we want to bring in more of the voluntary organisations, and more of the private component in terms of hiring maids, we have to professionalise that - either through legislation or through training and incentives to get people to hire professional help.

"This is so that we can raise the standard of long-term care as an alternative to more expensive hospital specialised care."

The workshop was jointly organised by the Social Lab at the Institute of Policy Studies and the Social Science and Policy Cluster of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at the National University of Singapore.