

New app aims to help seniors keep track of health needs after leaving hospital

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Seniors who have been discharged from hospital and live alone cannot keep track of medications, diet and health appointments with the help of a new app and doctors from the National University Hospital (NUH).

The Silver Buddy initiative pairs seniors with volunteers to tap the Buddy Aide app for their caregiving needs.

The app has features such as medication instructions, information on follow-up appointments and therapy reminders.

The Silver Buddy initiative and Buddy Aide app were winners of an inaugural challenge launched in July last year by the Ministry of Health's Office for Healthcare Transformation and the National Council of Social Service.

The schemes are part of the Design4Impact platform that

brings together participants from different backgrounds, including educational institutions and the healthcare sector, to create and test solutions for Singaporeans' health and social needs amid Covid-19.

This year's challenge was launched yesterday and focuses on the mental health concerns of seniors, caregivers and youth.

Minister for National Development Desmond Lee, in an address at the virtual launch, said mental and social issues needed to be tackled together to better support vulnerable families.

"The solutions don't just lie with the Government. In fact, community partners have a significant role in integrating social health service delivery," he said.

"With their expertise in various areas, and their extensive local networks, they can help us



The Silver Buddy initiative and Buddy Aide app were winners of an inaugural challenge launched in July last year. TNP FILE PHOTO

to better identify where the needs and gaps really are on the ground, and meet these needs more quickly."

An open call for participation was made in August, with individuals allowed to register by themselves or in groups. Close

to 300 individuals registered this year.

Over the next few months, participants will come up with solutions to mental health and well-being concerns before pitching their ideas to organisers in December. Winners will

then get to pilot their solutions in the community.

The Silver Buddy initiative is expected to be piloted with patients at a geriatric ward at NUH early next year.

Volunteer buddies will be introduced to seniors living close to them before the seniors are discharged from the hospital.

Another winning project last year was BlockBox, developed by a group of students from the National University of Singapore and Yale University.

They created a community space at Yuhua Senior Activity Centre this year and paired 32 seniors who have hypertension with youth volunteers who helped them note what they ate, how much they exercised, and their weight and blood pressure measurements.

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