

Bite-sized workplace safety courses online for migrant workers

Pilot by NTUC and MWC allows workers to learn at their own pace during their free time

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A pilot initiative offering online bite-sized courses on workplace safety for migrant workers was announced yesterday by the National Trades Union Congress (NTUC) and Migrant Workers' Centre (MWC). The initiative is meant to uphold higher workplace safety and health standards among migrant workers here.

Workers can take the courses at their own pace during their free time to learn and refresh their knowledge. More details will be announced at a later date, said NTUC.

This initiative comes after the recent spate of workplace fatalities, which led to a nationwide call for companies to implement a safety time-out to review existing workplace safety and health guidelines.

NTUC assistant secretary-general Melvin Yong, who is also MP for Radin Mas, said workplace accidents can be avoided if there is adequate knowledge and awareness of safety and health measures.

Mr Yong was guest of honour at a May Day celebratory event yesterday at the MWC Recreation Club near Pioneer Road to recognise migrant workers for their hard work during the Covid-19 pandemic.

More than 6,000 workers attended the event, which included a

prize-giving ceremony for the winners of a photo contest, the distribution of care packs and bento meals, and a cricket competition.

Mr Sivanthaperumal Bhagathasingh, 29, a quality inspector at a shipyard, was captain of the team which came in third place. "When we get to play cricket, our minds are more fresh. And we are able to forget our work pressures, family pressures and stress, and we are able to enjoy ourselves," he said.

At a separate event, more than 400 migrant workers received free dental health screening under a partnership between non-profit organisation HealthServe and the National University of Singapore.

HealthServe, with the university's dentistry faculty and the NUS Saw Swee Hock School of Public Health, held the screening at Terusan Recreation Centre in Jurong.

HealthServe said it has seen an in-

crease in demand for affordable healthcare services, particularly dental care, by low-wage migrant workers here in the past year. Workers usually wait until they return home to get cheaper dental treatment. But because of the Covid-19 pandemic, they could not do so, resulting in pent-up demand now.

At the event, workers got free check-ups by dentists and were taught oral hygiene by dental students. Dental screening at a private clinic usually costs between \$70 and \$150.

Mr Islam Mohammad Shariful, 27, a processing mechanic who came to Singapore in 2014, had his dental check-up done yesterday.

"Without this event, we wouldn't know about our dental problems. We learnt how to properly brush our teeth. I will definitely be applying this in future," he said.

Also yesterday, the Foreign Domestic Worker Association for Social Support and Training announced a free financial literacy programme for foreign maids here. The pilot, held in Tagalog, Bahasa Indonesia and English, aims to train 200 maids by November.

Over five weekly sessions, they will learn about financial planning, loan management and how they can help with their families' finances. Seventy-five maids attended the first session yesterday.

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