

# Wheeling out help for those with trouble getting around

MediWheels scheme to help them get to medical check-ups more easily

■ BY TEO WAN GEK

MR YASIN Mohd Ali, 56, unemployed and diabetic, walks three times a week to the kidney dialysis centre which is six bus stops away from his home in Block 924, Hougang Avenue 9, so that he can save on bus fare.

He, however, suffers from numbness in his legs, and has to stop every five minutes for a break.

On the occasions that he takes the bus, he has trouble climbing the steps.

Yesterday, relief came for Mr Yasin, with the launch of a new programme called MediWheels.

He can now rent a mobility scooter at

\$10 a month and make the trips to the kidney dialysis centre with ease.

The \$120,000 programme was launched by Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong yesterday, together with Mayor of Central Singapore Community Development Council (CDC) Sam Tan, and Mr Yeo Guat Kwang, MP for Ang Mo Kio-Hougang division.

Funded by the CDC and sponsors, it provides subsidised medical transport services to elderly and needy residents, and those with disabilities.

It will undergo a six-month trial in the Ang Mo Kio-Hougang division before being rolled out in the rest of Ang Mo Kio GRC.

Said Mr Yeo: "Many residents with elderly parents tell me they find it difficult to transport their wheelchair-bound elderly parents for their medical check-ups. Apart from the financial cost of taking a taxi, they also have to take leave from work."



Mr Yasin Mohd Ali (left) joins residents in Hougang Avenue 8 testing out mobility scooters, which can be rented at \$10 a month. The new MediWheels scheme provides subsidised medical transport services to elderly and needy residents in Ang Mo Kio-Hougang division, and those

with disabilities. It also offers a private medical transport service by Green Crescent Ambulance and Caring Fleet, and a medical concierge service whereby grassroots leaders and volunteers will accompany seniors for their medical appointments. ST PHOTO: RAJ NADARAJAN

“This prompted me to think about how we can help – not just in providing transport and medical escort services – but also in ensuring the safety and well-being of the elderly,” he said.

MediWheels offers three types of services.

The first is a private medical transport service by Green Crescent Ambulance and Caring Fleet, which will transport

wheelchair and bed-bound residents.

Residents pay a subsidised rate of \$5 to \$30 for a two-way trip for their medical appointments. The normal cost of such a service ranges from \$50 to \$180.

The second is a medical concierge service, in which 15 grassroots leaders and volunteers from Ang Mo Kio-Hougang division accompany seniors for their medical appointments and relay doctors’ in-

structions to family members.

The third component is the mobility scooter rental scheme. Households that earn less than \$2,000 are eligible to rent the scooters at \$10 a month.

Said Mr Yasin: “Now I can also use the scooter to go to the coffee shops to meet my friends.”

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