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### Developing palliative care in Singapore gets a boost

SPORT

By S Ramesh, Channel NewsAsia | Posted: 13 September 2009 17:14 hrs

TECHNOLOGY

SINGAPORE : Developing palliative care in Singapore is getting a boost. Minister in the Prime Minister's Office Lim Boon Heng on Sunday said more details would be available soon on the Health Ministry's decision to liberalise the use of Medisave for home palliative care.

ENTERTAINMENT

A new movement is gaining appeal among the elderly. Mr Lim described it as the "slow medicine movement", where the elderly value the quality over quantity of life spent.

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This is something in line with the philosophy of hospice care in providing comfort rather than the cure.

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Palliative care is a key aspect of slow medicine and Mr Lim agreed that home care will help bring down medical costs for the patient and family. But there are challenges.

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Mr Lim said: "As the population of the aged grows and the numbers grow, the sustainability of a free service is one we have to look carefully at. Naturally, for those who can't afford it, we should extend help funded by public generosity.

iPhone App

"For those who can afford (it), perhaps it is time for us to consider how we can make a contribution to the care and service they can receive."

Android App

The Hospice Care Association is celebrating its 20th anniversary and currently it is the largest hospice care provider in Singapore. At any one time, it looks after some 900 patients. With greater funding, it feels it can do more in the area of home hospice care.

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So the Association hopes that the government's recent decision to revise its funding for in-patient hospice care would also be extended to home hospice care.

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Dr Seet Ai Mee, president, Hospice Care Association, said: "For us to be good in home care it is necessary for us not only to look at the patient's medical needs, but also their psychosocial needs, and actually provide for that kind of care besides the medical care in the homes.

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"We do not want them to get depressed before we can address the problem. Currently, the care is not funded."

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Dr Seet felt that it is not possible to continue with the practice of focusing on acute bed hospitals. Home care has to have priority too as ill patients prefer to stay at home during their last days. - CNA/ms