Free health screening services for 1,000 residents at Punggol 21 Community Club

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SINGAPORE – A pilot scheme to provide free health screening services, using the latest health technologies, for Singaporeans aged above 50 is now under way at the Punggol 21 Community Club.

Up to 1,000 residents can register online to visit a telemedicine booth at the community club, where they will be checked for eye and cardiovascular diseases, and other conditions like diabetes and obesity.

At the booth manned by volunteers, residents can check vital signs such as their blood pressure, body mass index and blood glucose level. An eye machine will capture their retinal images, and an artificial intelligence system will process the images to determine their health conditions.

The whole process takes about 20 minutes, and residents will receive a health report on the spot.

The results will also be sent to the Singapore National Eye Centre for assessment by specialists.

The booth, which will be up till Feb 28, is part of a ground-up initiative called the Community Telehealth Service, which was started by a group of nine graduate students from Nanyang Technological University (NTU).

The leader of the project, Dr Michelle Law, 31, a medical doctor who is now a PhD student at NTU's Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine, said they started this initiative after witnessing how the coronavirus pandemic had delayed many health screenings for the elderly and those at risk of health problems.

Mr Alvin Chew, 28, one of the project's co-founders, said this health screening cannot replace an official doctor's diagnosis, and they would refer users to a polyclinic or a hospital for follow-ups if any abnormalities are observed.

He added that he hoped the booth can improve the health literacy of the community, as it allows residents to easily access health screening services.

"Residents can just pop by and check their health status while on their way to the market; this is much more convenient as compared to them having to take a huge chunk of time out to go to a clinic or polyclinic," said Mr Chew, a PhD student with NTU's Interdisciplinary Graduate Programme.

Response to the scheme has been very encouraging, he added, noting that all slots in the first two weeks have been booked.

The scheme is funded by the Young ChangeMakers grant by the National Youth Council and oscar@sg by Temasek Trust, and is supported by NTU's Graduate College.

Mr Chew said the team is in discussions with other community partners, and they hope to expand this scheme to other community centres soon.

Residents who are interested can register for the telehealth screenings at this website.

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