

Careshield Life – Unlocking the first door

BY ADRIAN PAUL ANUGRAHAM

Old is our new gold, a stature carved & moulded by experience & wisdom over the years. Be it at work or home spending precious time with their own or dotting on their grandchildren, experience and intuition of our elderly continue to have an enduring as well as endearing impact on our lives.

We're on the cusp of a golden era. Yes, it is true that 1 in 2.75 will be working at age 65 & above in 2030 as compared to 1 in 5 last year. However, it's for a larger significance too, as we are entering new terrain in relation to long term care planning in Singapore.

A Context

For a start, so that we have some clarity of why Careshield Life takes on a character of its own, lets put some context to it. In general, long term care as a priority is normally deferred to one's latter years. What does take precedence over this are concerns felt almost daily in relation to the material well-being of self and families. This may include housing, education, holidaying and sustaining a desired lifestyle currently & at retirement, to name a few. Its conceivable we aim to fulfil our dreams and aspirations, live life to the fullest. On the other hand, the sense of immediacy and relevance of long term care doesn't appear to have the same kind of sway as does the embrace surrounding those priorities.

Collective Consciousness

Therefore, its inevitable long term care needs to be cultivated in our collective consciousness and watered regularly in an ongoing national conversation. This is so that steps taken remain meaningful, inclusive and decisively able to address this issue in the benefit and interest of Singapore residents now and in the future.

With these in mind, we unpack the first of those recommendations put by Eldershield Review Committee under Careshield Life. In this article, we break that down into 4 parts so we can see how they fit together to mitigate the challenges described earlier and work hand in hand towards the issue of affordability, sustainability and inclusivity, themes we'll find recurring and expanded upon, in subsequent articles.

1. Who is in this universal scheme

- Starting from age 30.
- Cohorts aged 30 to 40 will be enrolled upon launch of the enhanced scheme
- Subsequent cohorts enrolled when they turn 30.

2. Why a universal scheme

- Promotes greater collective responsibility &
- Leaves no one behind. It enables basic long-term care protection for everyone, regardless of pre-existing disability or financial status

3. How is sustainability achieved

- Covered without a significant impact on premiums, including for those with pre-existing condition, as the prevalence of severe disability at the younger ages is low.

4. How is collective responsibility achieved

- All future cohorts, including those with pre-existing disability, should contribute to the enhanced scheme.
- However, the Government should provide premium support for the low-income and those in financial difficulty, and claims should be paid regardless of their ability to pay premiums.

A piece of the jigsaw

Where a silver lining in the rainbow holds true, so no one is left behind, be it severely disabled or financially unable, though the chips may be down & a fall through the cracks may arise, there is such a silver lining for our elderly. For when the assurance of sustainable support & a social safety net turns into policy in 2020, one vital step forward for the nation's long term care planning would have come into being. But a giant one too, a leap that would put another piece in the right place of the jigsaw of Singapore's nation-building, a significant piece that defines a more inclusive, compact and caring society.

About the Author

Adrian Paul Anugraham is a licensed financial practitioner. He is an active IFPAS member and is currently serving in the IFPAS Education & Training Working Committee. He is currently pursuing the Chartered Financial Consultant (ChFC) qualification and is assisting in the long term care planning research for the E & T department.