



singapore

Bringing palliative care home to more patients

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Dover Park Hospice, one of nine organisations that offer in-patient and home palliative care, has tied up with Tan Tock Seng Hospital to make hospital visits easier for patients. Hospice staff can arrange for patients to be treated by specialists as outpatients, avoiding long hospital queues.

Dr Wu Hwei Yaw, Medical Director of Dover Park Hospice, said: "At some point in time, if the condition deteriorates further and the family cannot manage anymore, this home care team can also bring the patient into the in-patient hospice.

"So this three-way collaboration helps the patient and family navigate the healthcare system. It helps reduce the level of stress and hopefully improves the patient's quality of life."

Meanwhile, experts estimate that there are more than 2,000 children in Singapore born with life-threatening illnesses or cancer and only a very small number — 2 per cent — are receiving palliative care, whether in a hospice or at home.

Ms Adilah, 25, who was born with a brain disorder and cerebral palsy, is one of 80 who joined a palliative care service for children called Star PALS, which was launched last year.

Palliative care focuses on relieving and preventing the patient's suffering, but many parents have a negative perception of it and are often apprehensive when it is recommended for their children, say care providers.

But Adilah's mother, Madam Junaidah Sultani, said the service has eased the family's financial and emotional burden: "There are so many things I can talk to (the home care providers) about, and Adilah also has some friends."

Dr Chong Poh Heng, Medical Director of HCA Hospice Care and Programme Director for Star PALS, said: "I believe that with this programme, we will be able to put these children and these

families in a very good place so that their quality of life can improve.” CHANNEL NEWSASIA