



Residents of St Bernadette Lifestyle Village, an assisted living facility, at one of their regular activities. Such a facility is an alternative to nursing homes for seniors who do not require intensive medical and nursing care, but need help with daily living activities such as showering. ST PHOTOS: SAHIBA CHAUDHARY

## Guidelines for care in assisted living facilities

**Vanessa Liu**

Poor nutrition, inadequately trained staff, substandard hygiene and poorly maintained facilities.

These are among the issues common in assisted living facilities in the United States that prompted Dr Belinda Wee to help create standards for the industry in Singapore.

She roped in more than 40 professionals in fields such as healthcare, social work, architecture and technology to put together a guide for operators who want to establish a minimum quality of care for seniors residing in assisted living facilities.

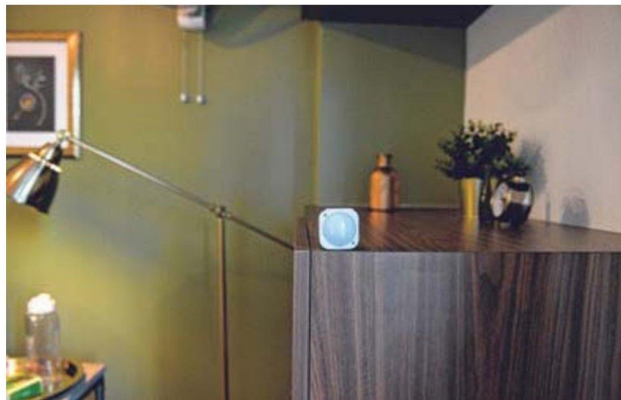
Dr Wee, who is with HCA Hospice Care, is the founder of Assisted Living Facilities Association (Alfa), a non-profit organisation that advocates assisted living as a model of care for seniors.

Dignity And Discerned Autonomy Assisted Living Care Tool was launched yesterday at Crossings Cafe in Waterloo Street.

The guidelines provide not only the minimum standards of day-to-day care that the elderly should receive in an assisted living facility, but also cover the operational and financial aspects of running such facilities for the operators.

Assisted living options have been explored in Singapore in recent years as an alternative to nursing homes for seniors who do not require intensive medical and nursing care, but need help with daily living activities such as preparing meals, showering and dressing.

One example is the integrated HDB project, Kampung Admiralty, which houses 100 flats for the elderly with a range of social, healthcare and communal facilities, including an active ageing hub and a



At St Bernadette, motion sensors are used in lieu of CCTV cameras for staff to track the movements and activities of the elderly residents in their rooms.

two-storey medical centre providing specialist outpatient care.

In a project run by the Agency for Integrated Care, seniors living in rental flats in neighbourhoods such as Bedok, Bukit Merah and MacPherson also have access to care workers at senior activity centres in the void decks of their blocks.

At yesterday's launch, Dr Chiang HaiDing, a member of PAP Seniors Group, said many seniors go into

nursing homes prematurely.

"For as long as possible, when we don't need 24/7 medical care, we should stay at home and in the community. When we need help to live, group homes that provide social care offer a safe alternative to ageing in place, and a better and more economical alternative to nursing homes," said Dr Chiang, 80.

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