

30 September 2022

MEDIA RELEASE

**AMP Convention to Explore Support and Resources Needed for
Seniors and their Caregivers**

1. Singapore's population is ageing rapidly, where about one in four Singaporeans will be 65 years and older by 2030. Correspondingly, the average family eldercare hours are expected to increase by 41 percent, from 29 to 41 hours per week. This calls for a closer look into issues that will arise along with the caregiving needs of seniors as well as the needs of their caregivers. Specifically for the Muslim community, research has shown that Singapore Muslim seniors have distinctly different perceptions of ageing and eldercare from the majority population. In line with this, the AMP 4th National Convention will be exploring support and resources that Muslim seniors and their caregivers need that may be unique to the community.
2. According to the research done by the Seniors Panel of the Convention, about 71% of respondents agreed that the Muslim community is passive towards issues faced by seniors. One key reason for this is because of the high sensitivity of issues relating to eldercare. The concept of filial piety prevents the Muslim community from discussing the possible options of outsourcing the work of caregiving to programmes and services external to the home. Respondents discussed how concepts of filial piety should be broadened and that there should be greater acceptance of care services outside the family. Yet at the same time, they hoped the younger generation could dedicate more time to caregiving for the elder generation. As such, there seems to be a need to ensure the Muslim community remain steadfast in its practice of filial piety, while at the same time expand the definition of filial piety to include caregiving beyond family members.
3. The research by the Seniors Panel also looked at the senior care services and programmes that are available today. According to respondents of the research, the existing programmes and services could further be improved in terms of its proximity to caregivers, affordability and increased cultural sensitivity towards Muslim seniors. At the same time, the respondents opined that there are inadequate home nursing services and day care centres, two services that are attractive to the Muslim community as these services allow seniors to continue living at home yet receive the support that they need.

4. In order to enhance and create more robust community support networks to alleviate the challenges caregivers face while improving the quality of care for Muslim elders, four key issues will be discussed at the Convention. These are: 1) addressing the gap between awareness of challenges in caregiving and overcoming them; 2) enhancements to operations of senior services, 3) catered eldercare programmes for community needs; and 4) empowering the community for advocacy on senior issues. Details of the Panel's key findings can be found in the Annex.
5. To kickstart the discussion, the Seniors Panel invites members of the public to join in the forum online at convo4.sg/seniors. They can also visit the Convention social media channels on Instagram and Facebook: [instagram.com/convo_4](https://www.instagram.com/convo_4) and [facebook.com/convo4.sg](https://www.facebook.com/convo4.sg) for more information.
6. The AMP 4th National Convention will be held on Saturday 15 October 2022 at 8.30am at MAX Atria at the Singapore EXPO (1 Expo Drive, Level 2). To register for the Convention, members of the public can visit convo4.sg.
7. AMP Singapore organises a national convention every decade and dedicates it as a platform for local Muslim professionals to discuss new strategies that can propel the Muslim community in Singapore towards greater success. Each convention has resulted in significant solutions that have been critical to the development of the Singapore Muslim community, including the formation of AMP in 1991, a year after the first Convention was held. As a platform, the Convention offers opportunities for critical discourse on issues relevant to the community, which is reflective of AMP's consultative and collaborative approach. The 1st Convention was held in 1990; the 2nd Convention was held in 2000, while the 3rd Convention was held in 2012. The 4th Convention will differ from previous Conventions as it will adopt a human-centred design thinking approach for the first time ever. Through this approach, the Convention will look at issues from the perspective of four personas pertinent to the long-term development of the community, namely youths, community advocates, families and seniors. Panels looking into these personas have been established, comprising professionals from different backgrounds to lend their expertise in identifying issues that concern these personas and to facilitate the ideation process for strategies and solutions to these issues.

END

KEY FINDINGS & ISSUES FROM SENIORS PANEL RESEARCH

Methodology

The Panel adopted both qualitative and quantitative approach, which comprised:

1. In-depth interviews with six practitioners from two service providers in the community care service sector
 - To understand their concerns and challenges from their experience in providing community care services
 - To help identify social gaps and understand cultural attitudes of Muslim seniors toward eldercare services in general
2. Online perception survey
 - 61 respondents, who are mostly caregivers

Key Findings

Knowledge of Caregiving Challenges but Not How to Overcome Them

- According to respondents, while caregivers are aware of the ageing-related concerns that seniors face, there is less awareness of how to resolve these concerns and what resources are available.
- Some ageing-related problems include the deterioration of physical health and decreased cognitive function in the form of dementia, boredom, and loneliness.
- 64% of respondents reported having a less than good awareness of the programmes and services available to improve caregiving for seniors. According to them, caregivers were unaware of the services and programmes available for seniors to manage ageing-related concerns.

Operations of Senior Services: More Cultural Sensitivity, Closer Proximity to Caregivers, and Affordability

- As perceived by the respondents, caregivers from the Muslim community highlighted how the current system in place to care for Muslim seniors in Singapore continues to be inadequate in meeting the needs of Muslim seniors.
- According to them, senior care services are located at inconvenient locations far from home, remain costly, and suffer from a lack of home nursing services and day care centres – services that caregivers from the Muslim community have identified as most needed.

More Muslim Activities and Reduced Language Barriers

- In terms of the religious needs of Muslim seniors, senior care services in Singapore are perceived by the respondents as not to be contributing to the spiritual development of Muslim seniors. There were worries about the lack of Muslim staff in senior centres.
- Today, there are both Muslim and non-Muslim organisations running senior care centres. However, according to respondents, caregivers highlighted how mainly non-Muslim organisations run these care centres, which is believed to decrease the likelihood of Muslim-centric activities being programmed.

Advocacy Role Within Muslim Community

- Today, respondents feel like traditional notions of filial piety prevent important challenges associated with caregiving from being discussed.
- Mosques, according to them, have been seen as a potential site to push for change and encourage thought leadership in the realm of senior care for Muslims. As a site of congregation for all layers of the Muslim public, mosques are seen as a potential forum site to discuss and promote the resources available to caregivers to assist with senior care.
- Respondents hoped that mosques can overcome the stigma of the Muslim community toward senior care centres and create an open forum to talk about eldercare. For example, respondents want to destigmatise the outsourcing of caregiving work to programmes and services external to the home. They also hope mosques and their leaders can advocate for new notions of filial piety.