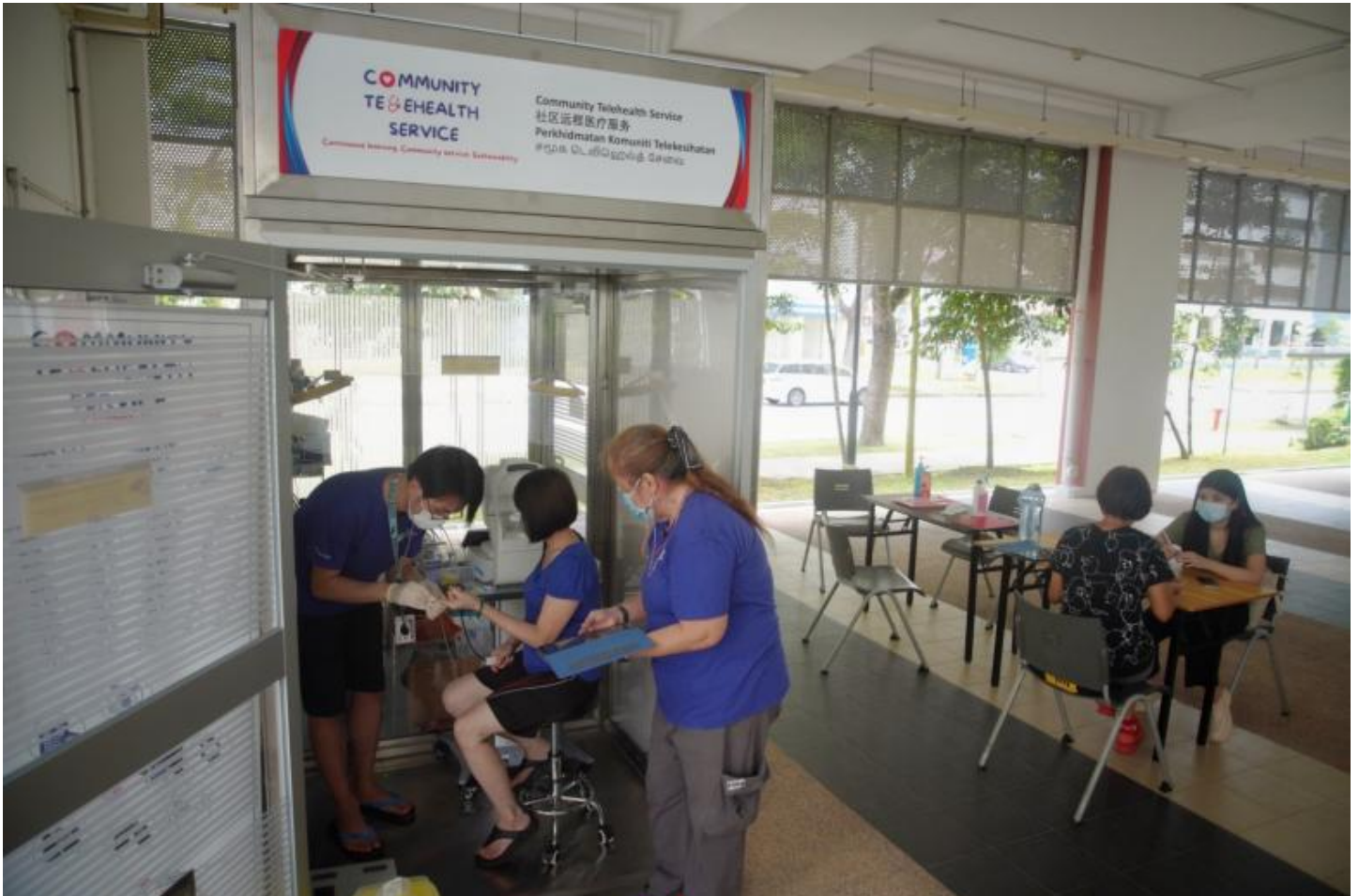


NTU post-grad students' free health screening expanded to include Bukit Gombak seniors



The Community Telehealth Service began on Sept 25, 2021, in Bukit Gombak and aims to screen 2,000 residents. ST PHOTO: JASON QUAH

[John Elijah Gan](#)

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SINGAPORE - A free health screening initiative led by graduate students of Nanyang Technological University's (NTU) Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine and Interdisciplinary Graduate Programme now extends to elderly residents of Bukit Gombak.

The initiative, Community Telehealth Service (CTS), began on Sept 25 last year in Bukit Gombak and aims to screen 2,000 residents, following a successful pilot with over 600 screened residents in Punggol in January that year.

CTS, manned by 30 NTU graduate and undergraduate students, along with 51 community volunteers, runs pop-up style booths at accessible locations for the health screening.

Mr Wee Soon Keong, 29, one of the leaders of CTS, said: "Many elderly residents have missed their health screening and find them inaccessible during the Covid-19 pandemic..."

"I am happy to see many residents getting their health checked here. Some have discovered possible indicators to diseases such as diabetes."

One addition to the booths at Bukit Gombak is a questionnaire based on the World Health Organisation's Five Well-Being Index to monitor mental health.

Associate Professor Ringo Ho, an applied psychologist at NTU's School of Social Sciences and one of the researchers involved with CTS, said: "The mental well-being of seniors in Singapore has become of larger concern as the disruptions caused by Covid-19 may have led to fear, anxiety and a sense of helplessness among them."

At the booths, residents can get their body mass index and blood pressure measured, and undergo capillary glucose tests and retinal checks of selected eye conditions.

A physical report is provided immediately after the tests and a health coach helps residents interpret the readings.

CTS said the health screening serves as a stepping stone for elderly residents to learn more about their health and to refer them to seek appropriate medical help if needed.

The initiative do not provide any medical diagnosis.

Manned by trained volunteer health coaches, the booths are designed to be accessible enough for volunteers without a medical background to operate them.

One such volunteer health coach is optometrist Sumasri K., who lives in Jurong West.

"These elderly residents typically live alone and enjoy the personal face-to-face interaction with the booth's health coaches, usually sharing more details about their health and well-being in this setting," the 49-year-old said.



Currently volunteer-led only, these booths operate on Fridays and weekends at two locations, Bukit Gombak and Kembangan-Chai Chee.

Mr Gan Teng Fong, 35, who oversees the business development of CTS, said: "Going forward, we will be transitioning the project into a social enterprise start-up model, where we can operate out of many more locations and timings within the community in a more sustainable way."

Bukit Gombak residents eligible for the free health screening include those over 50 years of age and those who have had their medical check-ups deferred due to the pandemic.

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Madam Tay Poh Eng, 65, found the service to be a great convenience.

"It has been very long since my last health screening and because of the pandemic, I try to minimise going to medical clinics.

"It was very convenient to sign up and there was no queue at the CTS booth... The whole process was very quick," said Madam Tay, who lives with her husband and daughter.

"I hope to see more health screening services like these that are accessible and convenient... It is helpful for older folk like me."

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