

SINGAPORE *20 yrs*

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30,000 people received \$74m through Covid-19 Recovery Grant

Syarafana Shafeeq

A total of \$74 million has been given out through the Covid-19 Recovery Grant to about 30,000 beneficiaries since its launch in January 2021.

While there are no current plans to extend the scheme after December 2022, the Ministry of Social and Family Development (MSF) said it will continue to monitor the economic situation in the coming months.

The scheme provides temporary financial support to workers in lower- to middle-income households who experienced involuntary job loss, involuntary no-pay leave or income loss due to the economic impact of the pandemic.

In response to queries from The Straits Times, MSF said the application window for the grant, which was previously set to close in December 2021, has been extended to December 2022.

It also increased the maximum number of grant tranches that eligible individuals can receive from two to three.

About 1,135 beneficiaries are still receiving assistance from the grant.

One of them, who wanted to be known only as Madam Rose, got aid from the Covid-19 Recovery Grant a few times over the past two years.

She received \$460 a month from July 2022 to September 2022 as her income from managing

tuition services for secondary school students was reduced by at least 50 per cent from March to May this year.

In 2021, she got \$260 a month from October to December, and \$500 from the Covid-19 Recovery Grant - Temporary in June.

The 62-year-old, who lives in a four-room flat with her husband and daughter, said her family was hit hard during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Before the pandemic, she could earn close to \$2,000 to \$3,000 a month from managing the tuition centre.

Since business was affected during the pandemic, she has found it harder to get students, and earns only a few hundred

dollars a month.

She said that business was affected because fewer parents were willing to commit to online tuition, and there were also fewer international students in Singapore seeking tutors.

"We used to get a lot of international students looking for tutors. They all went back home during the pandemic. Now, it's hard to get business... back to the way it was."

"When we could operate only through Zoom, it was a challenge too because a lot of students did not turn up for lessons, and we didn't get paid for those sessions."

She added that her 73-year-old husband found it hard to get re-employed due to his age, and now

works as a Grab driver.

He lost his job as a software engineer during the pandemic.

She said the money she received from the grant helped her to advertise her tuition centre to try to attract more parents and students and get business going once more.

Learning that there were no plans for the grant to be extended, she was a bit disheartened.

She said: "It has helped me quite a bit when times are hard. If it is no longer available, I will need to get help in other ways."

"But I'm sure if the Government sees there are still people like us who need help, it will happen one way or the other."

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NOT OUT OF THE WOODS

It has helped me quite a bit when times are hard. If it is no longer available, I will need to get help in other ways. But I'm sure if the Government sees there are still people like us who need help, it will happen one way or the other.



MADAM ROSE, one of the beneficiaries still receiving assistance from the grant.

Two who played key clinical roles during pandemic receive medical excellence awards

Recognition also for team behind CareLine service for seniors

Joyce Teo
Senior Health Correspondent

Two doctors who played key clinical roles in the Covid-19 pandemic were recognised on Monday as outstanding clinicians of the year.

Before Singapore received doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech Covid-19 vaccine in late December 2020, Associate Professor Lim Poh Lian, senior consultant and head of the Travellers' Health and Vaccination Clinic at Tan Tock Seng Hospital, was busy helping to calm public anxiety about the safety and efficacy of the shots.

As a member of the Ministry of Health's Expert Committee on Covid-19 Vaccination, she also dealt with the inevitable logistical hurdles that were posed by the sheer number of people to be vaccinated.

Prof Lim, who also helped identify Singapore's first case of monkeypox in 2019, has more than two decades of expertise in managing disease outbreaks.

She was awarded the National

Outstanding Clinician Award on Monday.

The award also went to Associate Professor Ng Kee Chong, a pioneer in paediatric emergency medicine who established the paediatric emergency preparedness plan in response to the rapidly evolving Covid-19 pandemic, as well as helped to advance clinical education in maternal and child health.

Prof Ng, who is chairman of the medical board and senior consultant at the emergency medicine department at KK Women's and Children's Hospital, was instrumental in establishing Singapore's first children's emergency service at the hospital in 1997, said the Ministry of Health on Monday.

Health Minister Ong Ye Kung gave out the National Medical Excellence Awards at a ceremony held at W Singapore in Sentosa.

Professor Marcus Ong Eng Hock, a senior consultant and clinician scientist at the Singapore General Hospital's (SGH) emergency medicine department, received the National Outstanding Clinician Scientist Award.

Senior consultant Daniel Goh



Associate Professor Ng Kee Chong (left) and Associate Professor Lim Poh Lian (third from left) received the National Outstanding Clinician Award; Clinical Professor Chan Choong Meng (second from left) received the National Outstanding Clinician Educator Award; and Professor Marcus Ong Eng Hock (right) received the National Outstanding Clinician Scientist Award. ST PHOTOS: DESMOND WEE



Adjunct Associate Professor Eugene Shum Jin-wen (left) with his Changi General Hospital CareLine team members (from left) Claudia Ma, Pearlina Lee and Eric Chen. The team received the National Clinical Excellence Team Award.

Yam Thiam of Khoo Teck Puat-National University Children's Medical Institute's paediatrics department, who has mentored paediatricians for nearly 30 years, received the National Outstanding Clinician Mentor Award.

The National Outstanding Clinician

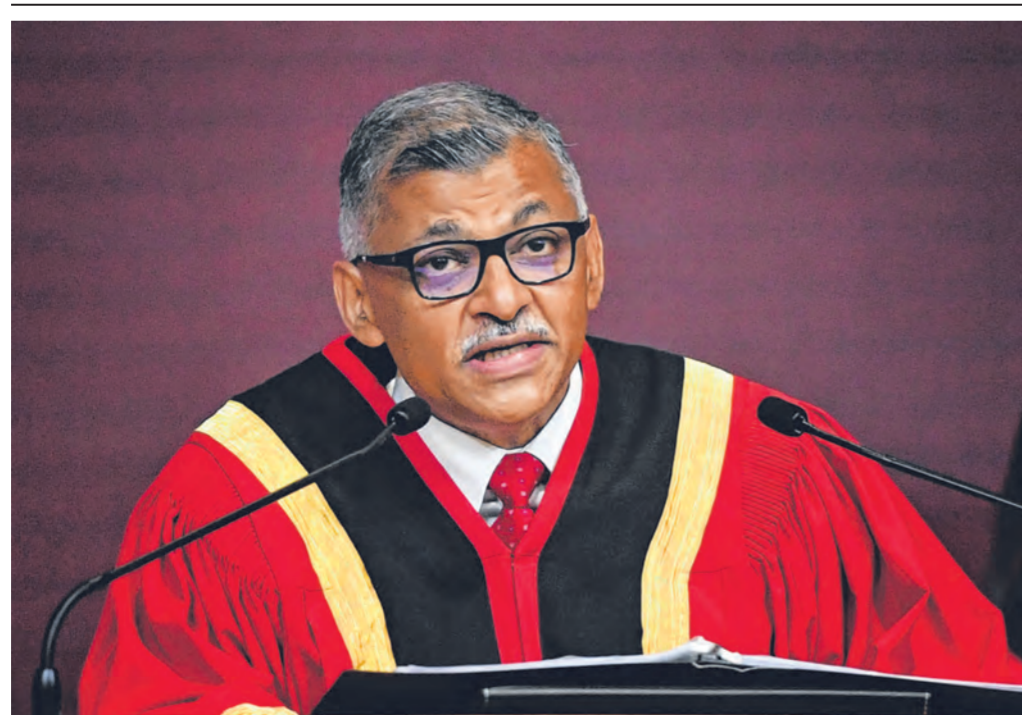
ian Educator Award went to Clinical Professor Chan Choong Meng, a senior consultant at SGH's renal medicine department and SingHealth's group chief education officer.

The team behind CareLine, a 24/7 personal care telephone service pioneered by Changi General Hospital (CGH) for vulnerable seniors in need of urgent assistance, received the National Clinical Excellence Team Award.

Led by Adjunct Associate Professor Eugene Shum Jin-wen, CGH's chief community development officer, CareLine has helped nearly 19,000 seniors age well in the community since it started in 2016.

The team award also went to the Community Health Assessment Team, or Chat, at the Institute of Mental Health. Chat, headed by Associate Professor Swapna Kamal Verma, offers free and confidential mental health assessments for distressed youth and advocates youth mental health literacy.

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