

New digital tool launched to encourage advance care planning

Users of myACP can state preferred medical treatment in line with their goals and values

Isabelle Liew

A free digital tool that makes it easier for Singaporeans to complete their advance care plans (ACP) online was launched on July 19.

Called myACP, the tool allows users to document their preferences for medical treatment in advance, in line with their personal goals and values.

They can also designate someone to make healthcare decisions on their behalf if they become mentally incapacitated.

The digital tool was launched by the Ministry of Health, Agency for Integrated Care and GovTech at Heartbeat@Bedok.

Speaking at the launch, Health Minister Ong Ye Kung said the tool eliminates the need to meet an ACP facilitator in person.

Anyone who is generally healthy and is at least 21 years old can document their care preferences and submit them online.

Mr Ong said common reasons for not completing ACPs include a lack of knowledge of the process and the inconvenience of making an appointment with a facilitator – a time-consuming step that may also involve fees.

Previously, individuals had to visit public hospitals, polyclinics or certain social care providers to make such plans.

Now, they also have the option of using the new tool, found on the My Legacy@LifeSG platform at <https://mylegacy.life.gov.sg>

It takes about 30 minutes to complete an ACP. Users will have to indicate their preferences on hygiene, companionship and religious requirements, as well as make a decision on whether doctors should prioritise comfort or carry out life-sustaining treatments, among other matters, Mr Ong said.

But those with existing illnesses, such as cancer or heart failure, will still need to complete their ACP with the help of their healthcare team or a certified facilitator.

At present, about 77,000 people have completed their ACP, Mr Ong said.

"This is 40 per cent higher than the national figure as at last year, but it's still very small a number," he added.

Mr Ong said the authorities are trying to encourage more Singaporeans to plan ahead.

While some people have preferences for end-of-life care, most are



reluctant to broach the subject with their loved ones while they are healthy as it is considered putting, or taboo, according to the minister.

"It will be too late to do so when they have fallen very sick and cannot communicate what they want to their loved ones. Family members and doctors are then placed in a difficult position to decide on the care approach," he said, noting that different opinions can escalate into family disputes.

"We need more open and early conversations about future care needs. When we plan ahead, we not only safeguard our own preferences, we also make things easier and clearer for families and healthcare teams later on."

In 2023, the Government launched the National Strategy for Palliative Care to raise awareness about end-of-life issues amid an ageing population. Since then, palliative care capacity has been expanded, rising to 3,000 home care places and 300 inpatient hospice beds, currently from the 2,400 care places and 260 beds in 2023, Mr Ong said. Palliative care competency was also strengthened, with 62 – or

77k

Approximate number of people in Singapore who have completed their advance care plan (ACP)

40%

Increase in number who have done their ACP compared to the figure in 2024

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of deaths happened in hospitals. This dropped to 59.8 per cent in 2024.

"While this appears to be a small improvement, it translates into thousands of patients having their wishes fulfilled. Attitudes take time to change, and we are encouraged to be heading in the right direction," he said.

Ms Clara Ng, 56, who completed her ACP online last week, said she decided to do so to be prepared for the future.

"I'm still at the stage where I have the capacity to think. It's good to log down what I want rather than wait till it's too late," said Ms Ng, who is currently completing her master's course in gerontology.

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(From left) CPF Board Retirement Income Group director Gregory Chia, Ministry of Social and Family Development Family Life Group senior director Tan Chee Hui, Health Minister Ong Ye Kung, Public Service Division ServiceSG chief executive Lim See Ling and Agency for Integrated Care CEO Tan Chee Wee at the myACP launch on July 19. (PHOTO: ADE/ATVINE)

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