



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

New initiative SPOC-19 extends support for dementia community during Circuit Breaker

Collaboration between Alzheimer's Disease Association and Agency for Integrated Care offers assistance to persons living with dementia and their caregivers who may inadvertently violate COVID-19 safety measures due to their condition

Singapore, 5 May 2020 – Singapore's leading Social Service Agency in specialised dementia care, the Alzheimer's Disease Association (ADA), and the Agency for Integrated Care (AIC) announced their latest initiative to better prepare and support persons living with dementia and their families during COVID-19, especially the Circuit Breaker period.

Named **SPOC-19**, or '**Support for Persons living with dementia Over the COVID-19 period**', the initiative aims to help families who may have concerns regarding their loved ones with dementia who unintentionally break the Circuit Breaker rules.

Some persons living with dementia may lack the cognitive ability to fully understand the COVID-19 situation. As such, they may not comply with the Circuit Breaker measures like practising safe distancing or wearing a mask, or may gather at closed-off hawker centres and other public areas. Caregivers and social service agencies have voiced concerns regarding the safety of those with dementia, and their inability to comply with safety measures.

To address these concerns, SPOC-19 is introducing three 'identifiers' that persons with dementia and their caregivers can register for. Members of the public or ground enforcement authorities can recognise this vulnerable group easily through these identifiers and offer appropriate assistance.

The three identifiers that persons with dementia and caregivers can produce are:

- 1. ADA Memo by Alzheimer's Disease Association (ADA) **NEW!****
- 2. Safe Return Card by National Council of Social Service (NCSS)**
- 3. In Case of Emergency, Dial (ICED) Sticker by Agency for Integrated Care (AIC)**

Of the three identifiers, the ADA Memo is the newest identifier introduced to complement the existing Safe Return Card and ICED Sticker. Persons with dementia and their caregivers can either apply through their Community Care providers or directly at www.alz.org.sg/ADAmemo for the ADA Memo.

"We have been listening to persons living with dementia and their caregivers, and we fully understand that it can be a challenge to adhere strictly to the Circuit Breaker rules. This personalised ADA Memo will identify them as being registered with ADA, and appeals for patience, support and understanding from enforcement officers in the event that they are



approached for breaking the Circuit Breaker rules inadvertently,” said Mr Jason Foo, Chief Executive Officer, Alzheimer’s Disease Association.

“With the implementation of SPOC-19, ADA hopes to inculcate a more understanding and empathetic community, especially in times of adversity for the nation, in the hopes of building an inclusive, dementia-friendly society.”

SPOC-19 will be applicable during the COVID-19 period. The initiative is supported by the Ministry of the Environment and Water Resources (MEWR), which is leading 50 agencies across Government on ground enforcement of safe distancing measures at public spaces in HDB estates. ADA and AIC also shared resources with these enforcement agencies on how to recognise the signs, symptoms and behaviours of persons with dementia, as well as how to engage them with empathy and tact.

Mr Tan Kwang Cheak, AIC’s Chief Executive Officer shared, “As the COVID-19 situation evolves, AIC and the Community Care partners have constantly explored various ways to continue supporting our clients and seniors. Working with ADA, this SPOC-19 initiative will introduce additional support to a targeted vulnerable group, namely persons with dementia and their caregivers. We hope it will relieve the caregivers’ stress in caring for persons with dementia during this period, and avoiding unpleasant situations for their loved ones outside their homes. We appreciate the support from various enforcement agencies on board this initiative in supporting this group.”

Through SPOC-19, ADA and AIC have also shared with the respective enforcement agencies on how to approach persons with dementia with empathy and tact, as well as to recognise the signs, symptoms and behaviours commonly displayed by persons with dementia.

The introduction of the ADA Memo has been greeted with relief by caregivers of persons with dementia.

“My mother always looks forward to our usual weekend outings and her mood would always fare better after. But due to the Circuit Breaker, she has not been doing well cooped up at home. With these new measures, we’re concerned about going out in a bigger group (when required), or if we’re unable to follow the strict safe distancing rules as my mother needs assistance physically,” said Ms Cheryl Tan, caregiver to her 70-year-old mother with dementia.

“The ADA Memo is definitely a step in the right direction to create awareness, especially with the authorities, on the difficulties and needs that we are facing during this time.”

For details on how to go about registering for any of the identifiers, see sections B, C and D of the Appendix – FAQ.

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ABOUT ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE ASSOCIATION (ADA)

The Alzheimer's Disease Association (ADA) was formed in 1990 because of a growing concern for the needs of persons living with dementia and their caregivers. The Association hopes to reduce stigma by increasing awareness and understanding of dementia; enabling and involving persons living with dementia to be integrated and accepted in the community; and leading in the quality of dementia care services for persons living with dementia and their families. Striving towards a Dementia Inclusive Society through its four strategic service pillars – Centre-Based Care, Caregiver Support, Academy and Community Enabling – ADA aims to advocate and inspire the society to regard and respect persons living with dementia as individuals who can still lead purposeful and meaningful lives. For more about ADA, please visit <http://alz.org.sg/>

ABOUT AGENCY FOR INTEGRATED CARE

The Agency for Integrated Care (AIC) aims to create a vibrant care community for people to live well and age gracefully. AIC coordinates and supports efforts in integrating care to achieve the best care outcomes for our clients. We reach out to caregivers and seniors with information on staying active and ageing well, and connect people to services they need. We support stakeholders in their efforts to raise the quality of care, and also work with health and social care partners to provide services for the ageing population. Our work in the community brings care services and information closer to those in need. For more about us, please visit www.aic.sg

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