

Home is where the heart is

WITH the growing population of senior citizens in Malaysia, we are increasingly faced with the concern of their care. Asian sentiments regarding the care of aging parents are primarily conservative, with many preferring to provide care at home. While some families are able to hire a full-time aide to look after their needs, it is not an affordable option for all. Coupled with the rise in cost of living, making it a necessity for more than one family member to provide to household income and reducing the chances for anyone to stay at home and take care of the elders.

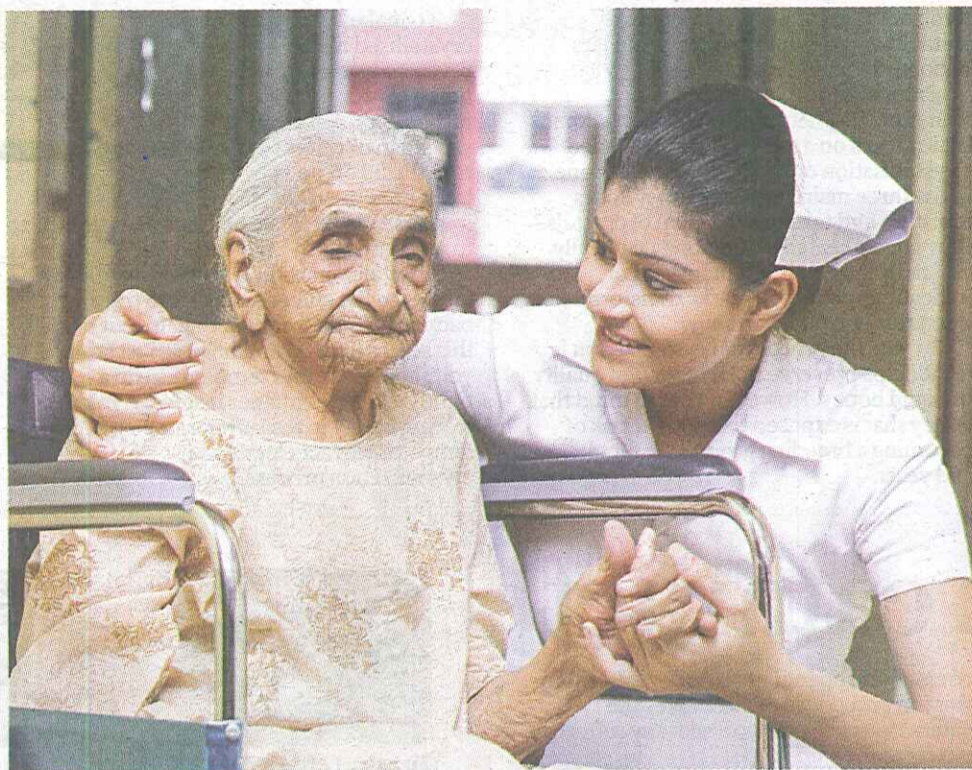
While it is great when they are in good health, an incident such as a bad fall or stroke will certainly necessitate full-term care for the aging parent. While some families resort to nursing homes to provide the parent the care and support required, unfortunately there are but a few nursing homes in Malaysia with the right infrastructure and care philosophy which may hamper the recovery or affect the wellbeing.

FAST RECOVERY AT HOME

Research shows that for those living with chronic illness or disability, staying and being cared for at home is often the best option for physical and mental wellbeing. This is because the presence and support of family members, social connections and the familiarity of a person's own home, is irreplaceable for a person's continuing wellbeing. Many seniors therefore prefer staying in their homes. This is also the most economical option considering the high costs involved in care at old age homes.

HOME HEALTHCARE

Home healthcare is a new concept in Malaysia. It is an integral part of the



healthcare delivery system in the US where it is used to discharge patients from the hospital as soon as possible after a procedure and keep the elderly and those with chronic diseases in the home instead of at the hospital.

The size of the industry speaks for itself, according to last year's data, home healthcare in the United States was over a US\$ 100 billion industry, larger than Malaysia's entire healthcare.

While the industry in Malaysia is still very

new, home healthcare can grow to become an integral part of healthcare delivery in Malaysia and benefit both patients and healthcare providers. These include:

- ▶ From a clinical perspective, it has demonstrated to lower rates of readmission and faster recoveries.
- ▶ It is good for insurers too. By integrating home care into their policies, insurers can reduce the amount of time that their

beneficiaries stay in the hospital (and therefore reduce costs).

- ▶ By discharging patients sooner (using their facility more effectively), hospitals can treat more patients and improve both their top and bottom line. In other words, hospitals are able to decrease their ALOS (Average Length of Stay) and increase their ARPOB (Average Revenue Per Operating Bed).

For more information on Portea Medical, South East Asia's largest and fastest growing home healthcare company, log on to www.portea.com.my

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