

One Medifund Assessment at Singapore General Hospital Campus and SingHealth Polyclinics



Esther Lim, SGH
Genevieve Wong, NHCS
A/Prof Celia Tan, SHHQ
Lee Chen Ee, SHHQ

Koh Lin Lin, SHHQ
Amanda Tan, SGH
Jeanaline Fan, SHHQ

1. Introduction

One of the medical social workers' (MSWs) key roles is to assess patients' eligibility for Medifund, a government endowment fund to assist financially needy Singaporeans with their medical expenses.

Over the year 2013,

Approximately 2,000 Medifund patients were assessed at multiple institutions

42 minutes were required per Medifund assessment

Approximately 11,000 patient touchpoints

Patients have to be re-assessed for Medifund each time they go to a new SingHealth institution.

A survey revealed that:

- patients are frustrated by the need to be re-assessed for Medifund at different institutions
- MSWs do not have sufficient time to address patients' psycho-social issues

Aim:

Eliminate the need for multiple Medifund assessments for patients visiting several SingHealth institutions

2. Methodology

A taskforce was established to explore the possibility of having only one Medifund assessment for patients. The taskforce was led by the Steering Committee, and consisted of three workgroups:

Systems & Workflow

- Reviews and re-designs work processes to support patient-centric care
- Looks into IT system enhancements to support the initiative

Assessment & Training

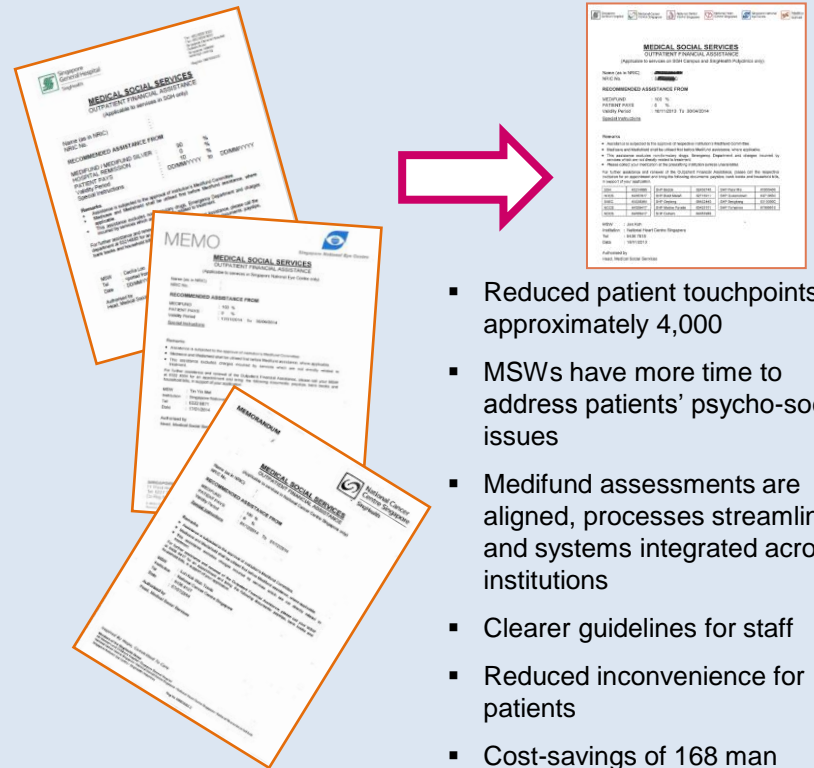
- Reviews Medifund assessment guidelines and criteria
- Conducts training for MSWs

Approval

- Harmonizes approval processes and authorities amongst institutions

A survey with MSWs were conducted before and after the implementation of the project to evaluate the impact of the changes.

3. Results



- Reduced patient touchpoints by approximately 4,000
- MSWs have more time to address patients' psycho-social issues
- Medifund assessments are aligned, processes streamlined and systems integrated across institutions
- Clearer guidelines for staff
- Reduced inconvenience for patients
- Cost-savings of 168 man days/year

4. Patient Testimonials

"I am very happy ... saves me a lot of time and money because I no longer need to make multiple trips to the other centres"
Mr Wan, 66

"I am satisfied ... it has helped to ease my financial burden and it has been less of a hassle."
Mr Said, 65

"The change is good as it saves me time from having to approach different institutions to apply for assistance."
Mdm Tan, 63

5. Conclusion

The One Medifund Assessment initiative provided patients with seamless care, which is in line with SingHealth's key priorities. The team is looking to expand the scope of the project to include other financial schemes such as Medication Assistance Fund (MAF) and MAF Plus, so as to improve patients' experience at SingHealth.

In addition, this SingHealth effort has become an important model and large-scale prototype for national efforts to align Medifund assessment criteria and assistance across all public healthcare institutions.