

Workplace safety, health gets total boost

New initiative to screen for chronic conditions expected to help 500,000 workers over three years

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Workers will be screened for chronic conditions such as diabetes, high blood pressure and high cholesterol so they can get help to manage them, under an initiative to promote safety and health at workplaces.

It will identify at-risk workers – those whose health markers are a cause for concern – and help at least a fifth of them achieve significant health improvements after one year of intervention, Second Minister for Manpower Josephine Teo said yesterday.

“Hopefully, this will also help reduce the safety lapses related to poor health,” she added.

The initiative, or Total Workplace Safety and Health (WSH) Framework, is introduced

under a collaboration between the WSH Council and the Health Promotion Board.

It is expected to help about 500,000 workers over the next three years.

This will be done through the setting up of more Total WSH services centres, the training of professionals including designated workplace doctors and occupational health nurses, as well as customised services to address health issues.

Half of workplace fatalities in recent years were due to ill health, Mrs Teo noted at this year’s national WSH campaign at Our Tampines Hub.

While last year’s fatality rate was low – at 1.2 per 100,000 workers – she said there is a challenge of sustaining the momentum for reducing deaths at the

workplace.

“It will not be easy, particularly when the construction and marine sectors recover and the activity levels go up,” she added.

At yesterday’s event, workers spent time with their families and colleagues while learning about health and safety.

The carnival included a 30m obstacle course, as well as ergonomic solutions and

healthy lifestyle exhibits.

WSH Council chairman John Ng said more has to be done to promote good work practices, such as involving everyone to reduce risks at workplaces.

“Every workplace injury and ill health is preventable, and we can take a little time to take care of ourselves and others in the midst of our work,” he said.

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