
SingHealth, Alexandra Hospital clinch inaugural international employer award

By **TAY SHI NING**

ALEXANDRA Hospital and Singapore Health Services (SingHealth) have won an international award for their positive policies on older workers.

The inaugural International Innovative Employer Award is an initiative of US-based non-profit organisation AARP, which represents 40 million members aged 50 and over.

AARP selected 10 winners for their recruiting practices, employee benefits, scheduling and retirement flexibility, and training opportunities, among other factors.

The other eight winning employers chosen by AARP were from Denmark, Germany and the UK.

At SingHealth and Alexandra Hospital, the respective proportions of staff aged 50 and over are 18 and 14 per cent. Both have programmes aimed at older workers.

SingHealth set up its Silver Connection unit in 2006 to enhance the employability of mature staff. It also adopted the Advantage scheme run by the Workforce Development Agency, the National Trades Union Congress and the Singapore National Employers Federation, which

helps companies implement re-employment policies and recruit mature workers. Eighty per cent of retired staff continue working with SingHealth.

Alexandra Hospital runs a programme that promotes health and lifestyle practices for mature workers, and is involved in Prepare – the Programme for Re-Employment Practices: A Roadmap for Employers, which helps other employers prepare for re-employment legislation that will come into effect in 2012.

“With life expectancy extending to beyond 80, growing numbers of

seniors have to remain employed. We are encouraged to see that there are already a number of progressive employers who have initiated innovative programmes to help mature workers,” said Gerard Ee, chairman of Council for Third Age. Council for Third Age collaborated with AARP to promote the award among Singapore employers.

Alexandra Hospital and SingHealth will be recognised by Lim Boon Heng, Minister in the Prime Minister’s Office and chairman of the Ministerial Committee on Ageing, in a ceremony on Oct 17.