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Media Release

TAXI OPERATORS' ASSOCIATIONS TAP ON U CARE FUND TO HELP TAXI DRIVERS AFFECTED BY INFLUENZA A (H1N1)

Caring Labour Movement sets aside over \$650,000 worth of immediate reliefs to taxi drivers



1 The Taxi Operators' Associations (TOA) have noted the latest Advisory on Precautionary Measures to Cope with Influenza A (H1N1) released by the Land Transport Authority (LTA) as well as the regular updates by the Ministry of Health (MOH).



2 In response to the current community spread of Influenza A (H1N1) and to assure the public that local public transport is safe for use, TOA with support from the Labour Movement will roll out a comprehensive "U Care-TOA Immediate Relief" package worth over \$650,000 to provide immediate relief for taxi drivers who are confirmed with the H1N1 virus. Additional initiatives such as short-term financial reliefs for taxi drivers whose incomes have been adversely affected by the spread of H1N1 will also be launched to ensure taxi drivers are well-prepared to help contain the virus amid the downturn.



3 The "U Care-TOA Immediate Relief" package comprises:



- a. Subsidised outpatient treatment support at 37 clinics under the Healthway Group which is offering standard outpatient services to taxi drivers who are TOA members at a discounted rate of **\$25 per visit**, inclusive of **three standard medications**; and
- b. NTUC's U Care Immediate Assistance Scheme will provide an additional subsidy of **\$15 to every taxi driver** who suffers from flu-related illnesses to tide them over



this special period of community spread of H1N1, and up to **three** visits over a **six-month period** at such subsidised rate.

4 Other short-term financial reliefs for taxi drivers whose incomes have been affected by the spread of H1N1 include:

a. Collaboration with Community Development Councils (CDC)

TOA have made arrangement with all CDCs to facilitate the application of financial assistance schemes to help taxi drivers who are facing financial hardship.

b. U Stretch vouchers

To provide relief to low-income TOA members to reduce hardship during the downturn, U Stretch vouchers worth a total of about \$150,000 had been given out. TOA members could use the vouchers to obtain 50% discount on purchases made in seven of NTUC's Social Enterprises¹.

5 During this difficult period, TOA will ensure that the fellow taxi drivers can provide their service without worry and that the taxi industry will exercise its social responsibility to contain the community spread of H1N1 virus.

6 On behalf of all taxi drivers, TOA have successfully negotiated and garnered the collective commitment and support from all six taxi companies to provide the following financial support for taxi drivers who need to seek medical treatment and have been quarantined.

¹ NTUC Club, NTUC ElderCare, NTUC FairPrice, NTUC First Campus, NTUC Foodfare, NTUC Healthcare and NTUC Link.

These are on top of the “U Care-TOA Immediate Relief” package and short-term financial reliefs that TOA have initiated:



- a. For taxi drivers who are on medical leave due to flu-related illnesses, all taxi companies will either provide relief drivers to cover the affected drivers, or allow them to temporarily return their taxis so as not to incur the cost of taxi rentals. They will be assured that they can resume taxi driving when they have completely recovered; and



- b. For taxi drivers who are confirmed H1N1 patients, the respective taxi companies have committed to subsidising their medical costs incurred for seeking H1N1-related treatments, their loss of income at \$30 per day up to 7 days, as well as waiving their taxi rental during their treatment and recovery period.



7 TOA will work closely with LTA and taxi companies to monitor the situation closely and respond swiftly to changes in the operating environment of the taxi drivers. We strongly advise all taxi drivers to continue to adhere to the precautionary measures outlined in the Tripartite Advisories on Influenza A (H1N1) to All Taxi Drivers jointly issued by the LTA, TOA and taxi companies.



Yeo Guat Kwang
Acting Advisor
Taxi Operators' Associations





About Labour Movement U Care Fund

In response to the economic downturn, the Labour Movement, consisting of affiliated unions, associations and social enterprises, launched the U Care Fund to collectively raise money with the tripartite partners. Exceeding its target to raise about \$23.2 million, the funds will provide relief to lower-income union members and their families. To help ease their living expenses, this will take the form of discount vouchers, scholarships/bursaries, and education-related vouchers as in previous years. The Labour Movement will also put aside funds for retrenched workers who might not be compensated due to layoffs and company closures.

Chinese Terms and Translations

National Trades Union Congress (NTUC)	全国职工总会 (职总)
Labour Movement U Care Fund	工运 U 关怀基金
U Care-TOA Immediate Relief	德士师傅协会 U 关怀即时援助配套
U Stretch vouchers	职工运动 U 惠券
Taxi Operators' Associations (TOA)	德士师傅协会
Yeo Guat Kwang Acting Advisor, TOA	杨木光 德士师傅协会代顾问
Chang Meng Dong Executive Secretary, TOA	张明栋 德士师傅协会执行秘书



U Care Immediate Assistance Programme

One of the programmes under the Labour Movement U Care fund is the U Care Immediate Assistance worth \$6.5 million. This programme provides immediate relief to retrenched workers, workers on shorter work weeks, and workers on temporary layoffs facing difficulties. In close partnership with the NTUC-affiliated unions and associations, eligible workers will receive immediate assistance ranging from \$100 to \$300, depending on their employment situation.

U Stretch Vouchers

This year, the Labour Movement will set aside \$6.4 million under the U Stretch initiative in the form of U Stretch vouchers that maximises the union member's expenditure with discounts from the NTUC family. To offer greater value to our workers, each voucher's discount has been increased to 50% off a \$5 purchase (from 20% off a \$10 purchase last year). Each booklet of vouchers will be worth \$80, and is expected to benefit 80,000 lower-income union members.

The vouchers expire on 28 February 2010, and can be used at 7 NTUC social enterprises - NTUC Club, NTUC Eldercare, NTUC FairPrice, NTUC First Campus, NTUC Foodfare, NTUC Healthcare and NTUC Link.

The eligibility criteria are as follows:

- a) Gross household income of \$1,800 and below; OR
- b) Per capita income of \$500 and below