A caregiver's life is silently heroic, and SingHealth has decided for the first time to honour them.

On Tuesday, SingHealth will give Inspirational Caregiver awards to 17 of them — some of them parents, children or siblings, and others, maids.

Professor Tan Ser Kiat, group chief executive of SingHealth, says: "It is important to recognize caregivers for their dedication to improve the health of their loved ones. Their selflessness has inspired hospital staff and the wider community."

The caregivers — and 20 model patients — were nominated by hospital staff from SingHealth's three hospitals, five institutions and nine polyclinics. Each will receive S$250 in shopping vouchers at an award ceremony at the Health Promotion Board.

Last year, SingHealth honoured three model patients in its inaugural awards.

Loo Swee Mee reports.

I have no achievements in this life. When my sister passes on, it will be tough to have a career at 40."

Now 70, she (above) with her sister Lim Po Chuan, who suffers from severe epilepsy.

"I believe I've come from a very fast family," she says, jumping directly to caregiving. "It is great being able to help them."

In her job, Mr Pathak has seen immovable "carefree" patients, whose medical problems have been misjudged. "I see a need for her to receive treatments," he says, looking at his sister Zhu, who suffers from breathing difficulties at KK Women's and Children's Hospital.

But Miss Sia has always taught her sister fortitude, and to be open-minded. "I see my sister as a model," she says.

Mr Pathak says: "I would want to show her the same all-around quality of care."

Miss Sia has learnt character from Mr Pathak. "I see him as a role model," she says. He is her workmate, her confidante, her friend, her teacher and her mentor.

She cares for her sister while her mum re-enters the workforce. The 45-year-old is now a bus service operator, and the family has moved to a larger house to accommodate the widowed mother.

"I cannot feel stress. If you accept the job, you have the faith, Mr Pathak was nominated by Nandini Malate (in striped shirt above)."