

## **The 70th Meeting of the Elderly Commission**

### **Press Summary**

The Elderly Commission held its 70th meeting today (10 February 2012), and was briefed by the Government on relevant initiatives in the 2012-13 Budget.

#### **Elderly care and support services**

- The Commission welcomed the Government's various initiatives to enhance elderly care services.
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- The Commission was particularly delighted to know that the Government had concrete plans to implement a pilot scheme on community care service (CCS) voucher for the elderly. This was a major recommendation of the Commission's consultancy study on CCS released in 2011. The Commission also welcomed a significant increase in the provision of both day care and home care places to support elders who aged in place, and the new programme to improve the physical setting and facilities of up to 250 elderly centres.
- In addition to increasing the provision of CCS, the Commission also acknowledged that the Government had continued to allocate resources to increase the provision of subsidised residential care places and enhance their quality.
- Furthermore, the Commission appreciated the strenuous effort of the Government in strengthening the support for demented elders. The substantial increase in the funding of Dementia Supplement for subvented residential care homes for the elderly (RCHEs), private RCHEs under the Enhanced Bought Place Scheme and day care centres/units for the elderly would enable these service units to engage additional professional staff or procure related professional services for the provision of proper care to every demented service user.
- In conclusion, the Commission believed that the above initiatives were in the right direction, and would be effective in addressing the long-term care needs of an ageing population.

## **Social security**

- The Commission welcomed the Government's decision to provide an extra one-month payment to recipients of Comprehensive Social Security Assistance, Old Age Allowance and Disability Allowance. The Commission believed this would help ease the pressure of the economic downturn on the elderly recipients.

## **Healthcare**

- The Commission welcomed the Government's proposal to increase the recurrent provision for the Hospital Authority by \$2.54 billion in 2012-13. This represented an increase of 6.7 % over the current year, and could meet increasing demands and improve services. Specific measures included –
  - enhancement of haemodialysis services for end-stage renal disease patients, improvement of magnetic resonance imaging and computerised tomography scanning services for the diagnosis of critical illnesses, extension of the Case Management Programme to four more districts to provide support for people with severe mental illness, and strengthening of chronic disease services by adopting a multidisciplinary approach in accordance with the primary care development strategy;
  - gradual expansion of the coverage of the Drug Formulary to provide more drugs with higher efficacy; and
  - additional funding to attract and retain health care staff, improve service quality and safety, and enhance response to contingencies.
- The Commission was also pleased to note that, apart from planning for the construction of the Tin Shui Wai Hospital and the Centre of Excellence in Paediatrics, and the expansion of the United Christian Hospital, the Government would also proceed with the redevelopment of Queen Mary Hospital and Kwong Wah Hospital, and would inject \$10 billion into the Samaritan Fund so that more people using self-financed drugs and items would benefit from the subsidy.

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