

(Translation)

Restricted

**Elderly Commission
Minutes of the 43rd Meeting**

Room 2005, Murray Building, Garden Road, Central
2:30 p.m., 26 September 2005 (Monday)

Present:

Chairman

Dr the Honourable LEONG Che-hung, GBS, JP

Vice-chairman

Prof CHAN Cheung-ming, Alfred, JP

Members

Dr NG Yau-yung, JP

Dr LUM Shun-sui, Susie

Ms WONG Yiu-ming, Anita

Mr CHAN Iu-seng, Star, BBS

Mr CHAN Chi-yuk, Kenneth

Rev LAU Wai-ling, Dorothy, JP

Mr MA Chan-hang, Leo

Dr YAM Yin-chun, Loretta, BBS

Mr TANG Kwok-wai, Paul, JP

Director of Social Welfare

Dr. LEUNG Pak-yin, JP

Director of Health (Acting)

Mr LAU Kai-hung, JP

Representative of Director of Housing

Dr Daisy DAI

Representative of Hospital Authority

In Attendance:

Dr CHOW Yat-ngok, York, SBS, JP	Secretary for Health, Welfare and Food
Ms Salina YAN	Deputy Secretary for Health, Welfare and Food
Mrs YEUNG HO Poi-yan, Ingrid	Deputy Secretary for Health, Welfare and Food
Mr FUNG Kin-yip, Eugene	Principal Assistant Secretary for Health, Welfare and Food
Mrs LEUNG YIM Sau-kuen, Eliza	Senior Statistician, Health, Welfare and Food Bureau
Mrs Kathy NG	Assistant Director (Elderly), Social Welfare Department
Mrs YUK KWOK Lai-sum, Kitty	Chief Social Work Officer, Social Welfare Department
Ms Grace CHAN	Chief Social Work Officer, Social Welfare Department
Mr LAM Ka-tai	Chief Social Work Officer, Social Welfare Department
Mrs Senna SMITH	Executive Manager, Social Welfare Department
Ms MAK Suk-kwan, Lorensa	Senior Social Work Officer, Social Welfare Department
Mrs KWOK LI Mung-ye, Helen	Senior Social Work Officer, Social Welfare Department
Mrs CHANG LAM Sook-ye	Senior Social Work Officer, Social Welfare Department
Ms IP Siu-ming	Senior Social Work Officer, Social Welfare Department
Dr CHAN Wai-man, JP	Assistant Director of Health
Dr CHAN Ching-nin, Clive	Senior Medical and Health Officer, Department of Health
Dr THAM May-ke	Senior Medical and Health Officer, Department of Health
Ms LOW Looi-looi	Senior Research Scientist, Health, Welfare and Food Bureau
Mr HUEN Chi-wai, Freeman	Assistant Secretary for Health, Welfare and Food

Mr LAW Hok-yin, Anson	Assistant Secretary for Health, Welfare and Food
Miss YEUNG Lok-sze, Cherie	Assistant Secretary for Health, Welfare and Food
Ms Rosaline WONG	Chief Executive Officer, Health, Welfare and Food Bureau
Ms POON Ming-soo, Bonita	Executive Officer, Health, Welfare and Food Bureau

Absent with Apologies:

Dr LAM Ching-choi, JP
Prof Jean WOO
Mr CHAN Han-pan
Prof CHIU Fung-kum, Helen
Secretary for Education and Manpower

Secretary

Mr CHEUNG Doi-ching Principal Assistant Secretary for Health, Welfare and Food

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The Chairman, Dr the Honourable LEONG Chi-hung, welcomed everyone to the meeting, in particular all the new Members and the new Secretary. The Chairman also recorded a vote of thanks to all retiring Members and the outgoing Secretary for their contribution to the Elderly Commission (EC).

2. The Chairman said that he and some Members had attended a Policy Address consultation session hosted by the Chief Executive, at which he highlighted the work priorities of the EC and pointed out that the EC, as well as collating public views on the elderly policy, should serve as a bridge among different departments concerned. He added that social organisations arranging activities for the elders always longed for EC's support. To show support to these organisations, he hoped that opportunity would be made available to

every Member to take part in these worthwhile activities on behalf of the EC as attending or officiating guest. Concerning the meet-the-media session held after each EC meeting, the initial thinking was that the Chairman and Vice-chairman would be the spokesmen for EC.

3. As regards the arrangements of future meetings, the Chairman said that while meetings would not be convened very frequently, several working groups would be formed. In addition, when ad hoc issues or events that attracted much media attention took place, briefings would be held where necessary and relevant Bureau(x)/Department(s) would be invited to brief Members on the related background and the latest developments. As for the agenda of the meeting, besides matters arising from previous meetings and scheduled agenda items, ad hoc items could be brought up for discussion if necessary.

4. Dr York CHOW, Secretary of Health, Welfare and Food, extended his welcome to the new Chairman and Members of the Commission. He said that elderly affairs had always been one of the important strategic policy objectives of the SAR Government. And the Government appreciated that health, family relationships and self-worthiness were the prime concerns of elders. Hence, the Government would seek to improve their quality of life through provision of long-term care, medical and health services, financial assistance and housing support, and facilitate them to age in the community. He looked forward to receiving views from Members on matters such as supporting facilities for community building, Residential Care Home for the Elderly (RCHE), health care reform and family doctor service. In formulating relevant policies, the Government would take EC's views into full account alongside with those of the Legislative Council Panel on Welfare Services, Non-Government Organisations and community groups.

Agenda Item 1: Confirmation of the Minutes of the 42th Meeting

5. The minutes of the last meeting were endorsed without amendments.

Agenda Item 2: Matters Arising

Enrolled Nurses Training Programme for the Welfare Sector

6. Mr Eugene FUNG, Principal Assistant Secretary for Health, Welfare and Food, briefed Members on a two-year full-time welfare-oriented training course for enrolled nurses which the Social Welfare Department (SWD) would launch with the assistance of the Hospital Authority (HA). The course was scheduled to commence in 2006 and would provide about 110 training places. The course would be subsidised by SWD. Graduates were required to work in the welfare sector for at least two years after graduation.

7. Dr Susie LUM (EC Member and also Senior Executive Manager (Nursing) of the HA) added that similar training courses had been offered by the Castle Peak Hospital and the Tung Wah Eastern Hospital in the past. In light of the nature of the course and the needs of the trainees, the course would enhance its content in practical training in RCHEs, including 18-week general practice and 8 to 10 weeks' psychiatric training. She said that around 700 to 800 nursing student would graduate in 3 to 4 years' time. Three other institutions had also applied to the Nursing Board to run a 3-year higher diploma course or associate degree course to train registered nurses. Course content regarding the welfare sector would also be strengthened.

8. Mrs Kathy NG, Assistant Director of Social Welfare said that the subvented elderly and rehabilitation services were estimated to have a shortage of around 200 nurses. Since 2002, the Queen Elizabeth Hospital Nursing School had started to train up about 100 nursing students each year through its 3-year higher diploma programme in nursing. About 100 students just graduated in September this year. In addition, over 500 nursing students would graduate soon, among which 400 would be recruited by the HA whereas the others could be absorbed by the welfare sector. She pointed out that the training programme for enrolled

nurses would provide proper learning and promotion opportunities for those currently working in the welfare sector.

9. The EC welcomed the programme unanimously and put forth the following questions/comments:

- (i) Consideration could be given to making the period which the graduates were required to serve in the welfare sector after graduation longer than two years.
- (ii) In view of the ageing population and the time needed for training health care professionals, the Government must expedite its training programme and formulate long-term policies on the training of health care professionals for the elders in order to ensure a steady supply of professional health care workers, and enhance the quality of elderly services.
- (iii) Would private RCHEs stand a better chance of securing a licence if they employed more registered nurses?

10. Ms Salina YAN, Deputy Secretary for Health, Welfare and Food remarked that the two-year full-time training course was launched by SWD at its own available resources. Nursing students did not have to pay the course fee. Priority would be given to suitable candidates currently working in the welfare sector. This course was different from the Blister Programme for the Welfare Sector a few years ago in that no subsistence allowance would be provided to the nursing students. Therefore, personnel who served in the welfare sector or other sectors might have to resign from their existing jobs if they wished to enroll in the course. It was inappropriate to make the conditions too stringent. Therefore, the Programme only required the graduates to stay in the welfare sector for two years upon completion of the training. It was hoped that nurse graduates would be inspired to stay in

the elderly sector after the two-year period. Ms Salina YAN added that the welfare sector had repeatedly relayed their concern about severe staff shortage to the Government and requested for resuming the training of enrolled nurses. The Programme was merely a stopgap measure to meet the pressing demand of the welfare sector. The Government would map out a long-term strategy on the manpower development of care staff in the welfare sector.

11. Mr Paul TANG, Director of Social Welfare, remarked that enrolled nurses would help enhance the quality of RCHEs.

Agenda Item 3: Presentation of “Building a Healthy Tomorrow – HMDAC’s Discussion Paper on the Future Service Delivery Model for our Health Care System ”

12. Mrs Ingrid YUENG, Deputy Secretary for Health, Welfare and Food, briefed Members on the discussion paper. Members then made the following comments:

- (i) Members supported the approach to the reform of long-term and rehabilitation care services for the elderly as stated in Chapter 7 of the Paper.
- (ii) It was considered that the quality of the existing health care service in Hong Kong was very high but there might be insufficient resources to sustain its present level in the long run. Members agreed that charges for Accident and Emergency Department attendants and in-patients in public hospitals should be increased to prevent any abuse of such services. Yet it was equally important to take care of the needs of the elderly and the low income earners. They suggested that research on health care financing should be speeded up to keep pace with the medical reform.

- (iii) If community care service was to be expanded, apart from the provision of adequate training and support for family doctors, family carers and community nurses, their abilities and accreditation in taking care of family members and elders should also be enhanced. It was also necessary to map out the long-term training and development strategies for different kinds of carers.
- (iv) It might be necessary to develop district-based model for community care service, as the needs varied across districts. The Government might also consider working with community organizations to develop care service for meeting the specific needs of the local community.
- (v) The health care service reform should also place emphasis on the preventive aspect. Among other measures, actions should be taken to encourage the public to lead a positive and healthy lifestyle. This would enable them to take care of themselves so as to avoid the need for or delay institutionalization.

13. Dr York CHOW thanked Members for their views. He said that the discussion paper was only the first consultation document of the HMDAC. The HMDAC would continue to consult and discuss with relevant parties and issue a consultation document on health care financing early next year. He pointed out that elderly services encompassed health care and welfare elements. He hoped that the public and private health care sectors could forge closer cooperation with the welfare sector with a view to achieving optimal utilisation of resources and better cost-effectiveness in the delivery of health care services. The Government would also work out a sustainable mode of providing and financing health

care services and extend the community-based home care services to facilitate the elders to age in the community.

[Mrs Ingrid YEUNG, Deputy Secretary for Health, Welfare and Food, left the meeting at this juncture.]

Agenda Item 4: Presentation of the major findings of the “Surveys on Socio-demographic Profile, Health Status and Long-term Care Needs of Older Persons Residing in Domestic Households and Residential Care Institutions”

14. Mrs Eliza LEUNG, Senior Statistician of the Health, Welfare and Food Bureau(HWFB), briefed Members on the preliminary findings of the thematic household surveys on elders residing in RCHEs conducted by the Census and Statistics Department between June and October 2004, including analytical data relating to the elders’ social and economic characteristics, financial status, health conditions and long-term care needs. Members put forth the following comments/questions.

- (i) Why did some elders start to apply for CSSA only after residing in private RCHEs?
- (ii) Did the survey include a year-on-year trend analysis?
- (iii) Apart from this survey, was there any information available from the Government or in the market about middle-aged people joining retirement protection scheme, so that the Government could predict future elders’ reliance level on the Government.

15. Mrs Eliza LEUNG pointed out that elders were subject to maintenance charges, after moving into private RCHEs and would have to apply for CSSA if they or their family

members could not afford the additional expenses. As it was easier for elders to satisfy the income and asset limits in the capacity of an individual or a married couple, they might apply under the single or two-person household category when they moved into RCHEs. Some elders applied for CSSA through that channel after admitted to private RCHEs.

16. Mrs Eliza LEUNG said that similar thematic surveys were carried out in 1996 and 2000. Together with this one, three similar surveys had been conducted in the past 10 years. The data collected under the common items of the three surveys would be useful in making general trend analysis.

17. Ms Salina YAN said that the C&SD conducted a survey on “Socio-demographic, health and economic profiles of elderly people and soon-to-be old people” in 2000 to collect, among others, data on the retirement protection position of the soon-to-be old or middle aged. In addition, the Central Policy Unit had set up an Expert Panel on Financial Security in Old Age, which would focus its attention on the study of the issue relating to the financial security in old age. Statistical Study and focus group discussion sessions would be carried out to explore the financial means as well as the arrangements for retirement protection of the young and the middle-aged. Nevertheless, unlike the present survey by the C&SD which covered elders’ functional capacity, the study would only focus on the financial arrangements of elders.

Agenda Item 5: Working Priorities for the Elderly Commission in 2005/06

(Discussion Paper No. EC/D/02-05)

18. Ms Salina YAN briefed Members on the fundamental principles of the discussion paper, current resource allocation of elderly services and proposals on the working priorities of the EC in the coming year. Members agreed unanimously on the setting up of three working groups to deliberate further on the subject of “long-term care model”, “active ageing” and “financial security for elders” respectively.

19. Noting that CPU would publish a report with recommendations on its study of financial security early next year, Members agreed that the Working Group on Financial Security for Elders should be formed in early 2006, after considering the initial findings of the said report. The other two working groups should commence work as soon as possible. Members also agreed to co-opt relevant experts and stakeholders into the working groups. The Secretariat would invite Members to participate in the working groups after the meeting.

(Action: the Secretariat)

20. Members had the following views on the discussion paper:

- (i) The Working Groups could serve as a linkage with different sectors, to collect their views and leverage on their expertise.
- (ii) On the human resources development of elderly care services, while it was necessary to emphasize on training of professional carers, attention should also be paid to training of social workers, particularly in enhancing their understanding of the elderly.
- (iii) To achieve the objective of ensuring harmony among different cohorts of people in the society, it was important to enhance public awareness on respecting elders through education.

21. Dr York CHOW said that it was the intention of the Government to help the elderly become more independent and self-reliant and stay active in the community. He hoped that the Working Groups, in the course of its study of the future direction of elderly care services, would take into account the issue of housing for elders with a view to facilitating them to live in a familiar environment in the community.

22. Mr LAU Kai-hung, Deputy Director of Housing, expressed support for the analyses made in the discussion paper and the other relevant reports. He pointed out that in order to facilitate ageing in the community for elders, the Housing Department, apart from adopting universal design in their new buildings or making alterations to old ones, had also started to work with the HA and the SWD in accommodating disabled persons in public housing and providing them with community care. Therefore, in terms of housing, the Housing Department was well placed to facilitate elders to age in the community.

23. The Chairman said that Members were welcomed to raise with him or the Secretariat subjects they would like to discuss in future meetings. Moreover, he asked the Secretariat to provide Members with a glossary and an abbreviation table on the technical terms relating to the subject of elderly service for their reference.

(Action: the Secretariat)

Agenda Item 6: Any Other Business

24. Members did not raise other subjects for discussion.

Date of Next Meeting

25. The next EC meeting would be held on 28 November 2005 (Monday).

Time of Adjournment

26. The meeting was adjourned at 5:35 p.m.

31 October 2005