

(Translation)

Restricted

Elderly Commission
Minutes of the 47th Meeting

Room 2005, Murray Building, Garden Road, Central
2:30 p.m., 17 October 2006 (Tuesday)

Present:

Chairman

Dr the Honourable LEONG Che-hung, GBS, JP

Vice-Chairman

Prof CHAN Cheung-ming, Alfred, BBS, JP

Members

Dr LUM Shun-sui, Susie

Ms WONG Yiu-ming, Anita

Mr CHAN Iu-seng, Star, BBS

Dr LAM Ching-choi, JP

Mr CHAN Chi-yuk, Kenneth

Prof CHIU Fung-kum, Helen

Rev LAU Wai-ling, Dorothy, JP

Mr MA Chan-hang, Leo

Dr YAM Yin-chun, Loretta, BBS

Dr WONG Yee-him, John

Mr TANG Kwok-wai, Paul, JP Director of Social Welfare

Mr Shane SOLOMON Chief Executive of Hospital Authority

Dr CHAN Wai-man, JP Representative of Director of Health

In Attendance:

Ms Sandra LEE, JP	Permanent Secretary for Health and Welfare	
Ms YIP Man-kuen, Carol, JP	Deputy Secretary for Health, Welfare and Food	
Miss LEE Man-ching, Eliza	Deputy Secretary for Health, Welfare and Food	} In Attendance for Agenda Item 4
Miss LAM Shuk-ye, Hinny	Principal Assistant Secretary for Health, Welfare and Food	
Ms LEUNG Wing-ye, Winnie	Assistant Secretary for Health, Welfare and Food	
Ms CHEUNG Siu-hing, Sheila	Executive Producer, Radio Television Hong Kong [in attendance for agenda item 6]	
Mr FUNG Kin-yip, Eugene	Principal Assistant Secretary for Health, Welfare and Food	
Mrs Kathy NG	Assistant Director (Elderly), Social Welfare Department	
Mrs YUK KWOK Lai-sum, Kitty	Chief Social Work Officer, Social Welfare Department	
Mrs Senna SMITH	Executive Manager, Social Welfare Department	
Ms LEUNG Mei-wah	Senior Social Work Officer, Social Welfare Department	
Ms IP Siu-ming	Senior Social Work Officer, Social Welfare Department	
Dr Daisy DAI	Senior Executive Manager, Hospital Authority	
Dr THAM May-ked	Senior Medical and Health Officer, Department of Health	
Ms LOW Looi-looi	Senior Research Scientist, Health, Welfare and Food Bureau	
Miss CHAN Nga-sze, Joyce	Assistant Secretary for Health, Welfare and Food	
Mr AU Kai-fung, Albert	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:

Prof Jean WOO

Mr CHAN Han-pan

Director of Housing

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 Che-hung, welcomed all to the meeting, in particular Ms Carol YIP, the newly appointed Deputy Secretary for Health, Welfare and Food, who attended the meeting of the Elderly Commission (EC) for the first time.

2. The Chairman reported that a few months ago, a delegation of EC Members attended the International Federation on Ageing's 8th Global Conference on the "Challenges and Opportunities of an Ageing Population" held in Denmark and also visited the elderly facilities in Denmark and Sweden. The Secretariat had forwarded the report of the visit to Members for reference via email. Members were welcome to seek further information from the Secretariat on the report.

Agenda Item 1: Confirmation of the Minutes of the 46th Meeting

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

Agenda Item 2: Matters Arising

4. There was no matter arising from the minutes of the 46th meeting.

Agenda Item 3: Briefing on the 2006-07 Policy Address

5. Ms Carol Yip, Deputy Secretary for Health, Welfare and Food, briefed Members on the new initiatives on elderly care and the “family-based” policy objective in the 2006-07 Policy Address through a Powerpoint presentation.

6. Members remarked that the “family-based” approach of the Policy Address and the direction of the EC were complementary. The concept of “ageing in the community” and the “family-based” policy objective were indeed two sides of the same coin. Members also welcomed the Government’s proposal to study the setting up of a Family Commission for more effective coordination among various advisory bodies and relevant government departments. Members indicated their readiness to provide inputs on the study.

7. A Member reckoned that the Government should study further into the concept of “ageing at home”, with a view to obtaining more data for the formulation of policy initiatives conducive to “ageing at home” and further promoting the concept. Another Member held that the Government should assess whether there were sufficient respite service in residential care homes for the elderly (RCHEs) and day care centres/units for the elderly.

8. Mrs Kathy NG, Assistant Director (Elderly) of Social Welfare Department (SWD), said that the home care service would have to be reviewed in the long term. As for respite service for elders, she reported that there were currently over 120 RCHEs which provided residential respite service for elders by making use of their casual vacancies available, coupled with 51 day care centres/units for the elderly across the territory which also provided day respite service through the same mode of operation. Besides, there were 11 RCHEs and

11 day care centres/units for the elderly across the territory providing 11 designated residential respite places and 41 designated day respite places respectively. The SWD would step up the promotion of respite service among carers of the elderly to provide relief to them.

[Dr Daisy DAI of the Hospital Authority joined the meeting at this juncture]

9. Ms Sandra LEE, Permanent Secretary for Health and Welfare, told the meeting that the HWFB would complete the study on the establishment of the Family Commission within six months and then brief the EC on the findings of the study.

Agenda Item 4: Review of Domestic Violence Ordinance (Cap 189)

(Discussion Paper No. EC/D/01-06)

10. Miss Eliza LEE, Deputy Secretary for Health, Welfare and Food, briefed Members on the proposed amendments to the Domestic Violence Ordinance.

11. An overwhelming majority of Members supported the amendments to the Domestic Violence Ordinance (DVO) proposed by the Government. However, Members had reservations about the proposal to extend the scope of the DVO beyond spousal/cohabitation relationships. Members were of the view that legislation would not be a solution to family problems and we should not lightly venture into this. They also held the view that extension of the scope of the DVO to cover parent-adult sons/daughters and parent-adult sons/daughters-in-law relationships would not be an effective means to address the issue of elder abuse in the domestic context. It might have adverse effect and aggravate the situation, leading to relationship breakdown between the elderly and their family members. It might also add tension to the in-law family relationships and result in the separation of the elderly from their families. This would work against the goal of harmonious family being advanced by the Government. In the end, the elderly might still suffer or lose protection.

12. Members also noted that apart from the proposed legislative amendments, the Government had provided additional resources over the past two years and would continue to do so in the coming year to enhance the services and support available to victims of domestic violence. On the issue of elder abuse, Members considered that in the longer term, the Government should explore specific measures to address the issue and study measures to provide more legal-protection for the elders.

13. In addition, Members also put forward the following views:

- (1) At present, the DVO was aimed to deal with violence between spouses and this might be based on the premise that marital relationship was the only family relationship that could be dissolved by way of legal proceedings whereas other family relationships like the blood relationship between parents and children could not be dissolved in the same manner.
- (2) The DVO was enacted in 1980's and it was an appropriate time to review and update the ordinance in order to afford better protection to victims of domestic violence. The Government should take into account the current situation of domestic violence and amend the DVO by expanding the scope of coverage from spouses/cohabitants to include also ex-spouses/ex-cohabitants.
- (3) The DVO should be renamed to spell out clearly that the ordinance was intended to cover the spousal/cohabitation relationships.
- (4) The DVO aimed to separate the victims and the abusers, and it would not serve the purpose of achieving the ultimate goal of family harmony.
- (5) It might cause significant impact on the elderly if the dispute with the family end up in litigation between the elderly and their children. It might even

make it more difficult for the elderly to mend their relationship with family members.

- (6) Separation of abused elders from the abusing children might help protect the elderly, but it might not necessarily be the best option for the elderly because they might be forced to leave their families and move to the residential care homes.
- (7) Statistics showed a rising trend of elder abuse by domestic helpers. In the longer term, the Government should explore measures that addressed the relationship between the carers and the care-receivers in the light of the actual circumstances.
- (8) To tackle elder abuse, early identification and prevention of domestic violence were of utmost importance. For cases that were not preventable, we should put our emphasis on the crisis intervention to provide necessary services for the abused elders, such as conciliation and psychological counselling services, as well as counselling programmes for the abusers with a view to changing their behaviour. Taking legal action should be the last resort.

14. A Member remarked that the Chinese title of the DVO should be amended to make it more precise. The scope of the DVO should also be extended to include provisions for the prevention and mediation of domestic violence as well as dealing with elder abuse.

15. Mr Paul TANG, Director of Social Welfare, pointed out that according to the experience gained in practice most of the elders were reluctant to testify against their own sons or daughters while some of them refused to seek help from the police or testify in court

for fear that their children would be sent to prison. On the other hand, if the DVO was to be amended to cover parent-adult sons/daughters relationships, this might give rise to a scenario where the children might apply for an injunction to forbid their elderly parent(s) to enter their homes, which was contrary to the original intention of protecting the elderly. He considered that as a long-term solution, greater efforts should be made to educate the elderly and to improve their quality of life, so as to build their resilience by sprucing up their images.

[Miss Eliza LEE, Miss Hinny LAM and Ms Winnie LEUNG left the meeting at this juncture.]

Agenda Item 5: Reports on the Progress of the Working Group on Long Term Care
(LTC) Model and Working Group on Active Ageing (WGAA)

16. Dr LAM Ching-choi, Chairman of the Working Group on LTC Model, reported on the progress of the Working Group. He informed the meeting that four initiatives would be launched by the Working Group, including the dissemination of the message of “ageing at home” through a new series of “Golden Age” produced by the Public Affairs Television Division of Radio Television Hong Kong (RTHK); holding a seminar on the theme of “ageing at home” on 18 November 2006; further bringing forward the proposal for enhancing the training of informal carers; and launching an event to give recognition to the outstanding informal carers in 2007.

17. Dr LAM Ching-choi added that the Working Group would put forward more detailed proposals regarding the event to give recognition to the outstanding informal carers, and the enhanced training for informal carers of the elderly.

18. Prof Alfred CHAN, Chairman of the WGAA, briefed Members on the progress of the Working Group. Members noted that an exhibition on “Silver Hair Market Fair” would be held in mid November to promote the development of elderly consumer market.

Agenda Item 6: Briefing on “Golden Age IV”

19. Ms Sheila Cheung, Executive Producer, Public Affairs Television Division, RTHK, briefed Members on the new 10-episode series of “Golden Age IV” programme co-sponsored by the EC and the HWFB, and produced by the RTHK. The TV programme had been broadcast since 7 October 2006 on ATV Home Channel every Saturday. She said that the new series focused on themes about ageing at home, intergenerational solidarity and positive image of ageing. She agreed to furnish the rating figures to the EC in due course.

20. Members noted that episodes of the programme had been uploaded onto the website of the RTHK and hyperlinked to the website of the EC for public viewing. Similar to the arrangements for the “Pre-retirement Workshop”, the RTHK planned to have footages and information of the “Silver Hair Market Fair” and the seminar on “Ageing at home” uploaded onto the website of the RTHK and hyperlinked to the website of the EC upon their conclusion.

21. The “Golden Age — 50’s Love Letters” Essay Competition, an extended programme of the Golden Age series, had been successfully completed. To foster family cohesion and encourage caring of the elderly among the young people, this year’s competition would invite the elderly as well as young people’s participation. The Ming Pao Press and the RTHK were now in talks about the publication of a collection of the entries.

22. The Chairman thanked the RTHK for its assistance and asked for their continued support.

[Ms Sheila Cheung left the meeting at this juncture.]

Agenda Item 7: Any Other Business

(1) Provision of community care for the elderly after discharge

23. The Chairman said that at a forum which he had attended recently, there were views that the interface problems relating to the coordination between public hospitals and local elderly care services providers had led to a situation where the elderly after discharge might not be able to obtain timely community care service. The Chairman suggested the HA to take a closer look at the current discharge arrangements for elderly patients in public hospitals and explore measures to fine tune the arrangements.

(2) Funeral arrangements for elders

24. The Chairman reported to Members that last month, the Hon Fernando CHEUNG, Member of the Legislative Council, together with representatives of some elderly groups had had a meeting with the EC to discuss matters surrounding the support services for the deceased elderly. The Secretariat had already given a reply to the Hon Fernando CHEUNG's office some time earlier and clarified some misunderstanding of the support services for the deceased elderly.

(3) Ad Hoc Group on the Elderly in Poverty under the Commission on Poverty

25. The Vice-Chairman, Prof Alfred Chan reported on the Ad Hoc Group meeting he attended on 19 September. Prof Chan told the meeting that apart from addressing the needs of the elderly in poverty in respect of their health, financial assistance, daily living and social network, the Ad Hoc Group also discussed ways of identifying and assisting those elderly poor not on CSSA. The Ad Hoc Group hoped to pay attention to and care for these elderly poor.

(4) Council for Sustainable Development

26. The Chairman told the meeting that the Council held a briefing session last month to brief the Social Welfare Advisory Committee and the EC on the Council's views on enhancing population potential for a sustainable future and seek the views of EC Members. In this connection, the Secretariat distributed a copy of the Council's paper on enhancing population potential at the meeting to Members who had not been able to attend the briefing session for reference.

27. A Member remarked that the EC should write to the Council setting out clearly that the EC regarded the elderly as a valuable asset in the community and an ageing population as an opportunity and a challenge, not a social burden. The meeting agreed that the Chairman, the Vice-Chairman and Dr LAM Ching-choi should jointly issue a written response on the EC's behalf.

(5) Meeting with the pharmacist associations

28. The Chairman and Ms Anita WONG reported to the EC on the meeting of some EC Members with the Institute of Pharmacists, the Practising Pharmacists Association of Hong Kong and the Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Hong Kong early in the month. At the meeting, the associations submitted to the EC a proposal on the implementation of how to enhance the drug management capabilities in RCHEs. The recommendations included setting up a computer-based system to monitor the dispensing and use of drugs, arranging regular visits by visiting pharmacist officers to RCHEs to help dispense drugs and streamline their distribution procedures, and establishing a Medication Safety Subcommittee under the EC as an advisory body to the EC, the HWFB, the SWD and the HA on drug management in RCHEs.

29. Dr CHAN Wai-man, Assistant Director of Health, said that the visiting health team of the DH had visited the RCHEs across the territory in the last two months in order to gain a better understanding of the drug management practices in the RCHEs. Consultation with the sector was underway for the production of the Manual on Drug Management System in RCHEs (the Manual). The views of occupational therapists and pharmacists had been taken into account in the course of the drafting of the Manual. The Chairman's suggestion of making the Manual more user-friendly had also been adopted with the use of more graphics to facilitate understanding of the Manual by the staff of the RCHEs. Upon the completion of the Manual at the end of this year, the Department of Health (DH) would brief the staff of the RCHEs on the application of the Manual early next year.

30. The Chairman expressed his gratitude to the pharmacists associations for their great efforts and dedication to assist in enhancing the capability of the RCHEs in drug handling, and noted that pilot schemes initiated by the associations had been carried out in some hospitals together with RCHEs. He suggested the DH to engage the pharmacists associations in the formulation of the Manual and take their views into account as appropriate.

31. The DH would brief Members on the key points of the Manual in the next EC meeting.

(6) Study on dementia jointly conducted by the DH and the Chinese University of Hong Kong (CU)

32. Dr CHAN Wai-man, Assistant Director of Health, told the meeting that the DH, in collaboration with the Department of Psychiatry of the CU, made use of the Thematic Household Survey of Census and Statistics Department (C&SD), to interview 6 100 elders last year. Of the 737 elders who were assessed for Dementia by psychiatrists subsequently, it was found that the prevalence of Dementia in the community was 9.3% among those aged

70 or above. The data collected would be further analysed to shed more light on the prevalence of Dementia in Hong Kong. She said that the DH had rolled out a series of programmes on the promotion of the awareness of Dementia since 13 October 2006, including the production of a VCD and strengthening the training for the staff of RCHEs on the care of demented elders, in an effort to help the demented elderly and their carers.

33. A Member said that notwithstanding the increase in dementia cases in the existing private RCHEs, the HA had not provided them with outreach psychiatric services. He pointed out that according to a university survey, the prevalence rate of mental illnesses among elder residents of RCHEs was four times higher when compared with the elderly living in the community. In light of this, he considered that the scope of outreach psychiatric services should be extended to private RCHEs.

34. Mr SOLOMAN, Chief Executive of the HA, noted the service needs of private RCHEs regarding HA's outreach psychiatric services. Dr Daisy DAI, Senior Executive Manager of the HA, told the meeting that, presently, RCHEs were served by the Community Geriatric Assessment teams which also managed demented elders in the RCHEs. For more complexed cases, referrals would be made to the psychogeriatric teams of the same cluster. The HA would study how such services could be enhanced.

(7) Others

35. The Chairman called upon the support of Members on the new TV series of "Golden Age IV", and the "Silver Hair Market Fair" and the Seminar on "Ageing in the Community" to be held in mid November.

Date of Next Meeting

36. The next EC meeting would be held on 13 December 2006 (Wednesday).

Time of Adjournment

37. The meeting was adjourned at 5:15 p.m.

31 October 2006