

40th Meeting of the Elderly Commission
Summary for Press Briefing

The Elderly Commission (EC) held its 40th meeting today (29 November 2004) with the following items on the agenda: -

(1) Traffic Accidents and Elders

- The Department of Health (DH) briefed EC on the overall situation of road traffic accidents involving elderly pedestrians in Hong Kong and the preventive strategies being adopted by the Government.
- In 2003, among the 14 436 road traffic accidents causing 18 310 casualties in Hong Kong, 10.6% of them involved people aged 60 years and over. Among the casualties, 24.7% were pedestrians and 69.7% of these pedestrians were elders. “Crossing road heedless of traffic” was the single most important contributing factor to pedestrian casualties among people aged 60 and over.
- The Road Safety Council (RSC) adopts a '3E' approach in promoting road safety through (a) education and publicity; (b) engineering by improving the road environment and safety standard of vehicles; and (c) enforcement.
- WHO’s slogan for this year’s World Health Day “*Road Safety is No Accident*” is echoed with the Road Safety Vision of “Zero Accidents on the Road, Hong Kong’s Goal” being adopted in Hong Kong.
- The Road Safety Campaign 2004 includes territory wide publicity like TV and radio APIs, a short educational video and posters with special focus on elderly pedestrians, and education activities organized by elderly service units in districts, including the setting up of “Road Safety Patrols” and visits to Road Safety Towns, in order to raise road safety awareness among elders and the public.

(2) Provision of Infirm Care for Elders in a Non-hospital Setting

- The SWD briefed EC on the latest development of its new initiative to start a trial scheme to provide subsidized infirm care services for medically stable infirm elders in a non-hospital setting.
- Infirm care is to provide personal and nursing care to elders and/or

disabled persons whose health conditions have reached the stage that active and intensive medical treatment cannot reverse their health conditions, to help them maintain dignified and quality living during the remaining period of their lives.

- At present, subsidized infirmary service in Hong Kong is provided in hospitals under the Hospital Authority (HA). However, for elders who are medically stable, hospitals may not be the most ideal place for them to receive infirmary care. Infirmary care outside hospitals will provide them with more homely and socialized environment and a better quality of life without compromising the quality of care.
- Providing infirmary care services for medically stable infirm elders in a non-hospital setting will ensure that hospital-based infirmary care services are targeted for patients most in need, including elderly patients, in the long term. It will also help increase the supply of and shorten the waiting time for infirmary care places for the elders.
- In the Director of Audit's (D of A) value for money No. 38 report on residential services for the elderly published in 2002, D of A recommended that the Administration should consider whether infirmary care should be provided in the welfare setting instead of in the hospital setting. SWD will launch a trial scheme to bring forward the idea of providing subsidized infirmary care services for medically stable infirm elders in a non-hospital setting.
- Major parameters of the trial scheme include:
 - (a) aims to provide about 140-150 subsidized infirmary places in a non-hospital setting for medically stable elders;
 - (b) for the sake of diversity of services, SWD will offer two contracts for the 140-150 infirmary care places so that there may be two operators. Each operator will be required to provide about 70-75 subsidized infirmary care places;
 - (c) the target users of the services are infirm elders aged 65 or above who are registered with the Central Infirmary Waiting List (CIWL) and are medically stable. Elders who prefer placement in hospital-based infirmary places will be allowed to stay on CIWL; and

- (d) selection of operators will be made through an open tender exercise in a fair and transparent manner. All existing operators of licensed residential care homes for the elderly, nursing homes or hospitals, with their own readily available premises in a non-hospital setting, are eligible to submit proposals for providing the services.
- Members supported the proposal in principle. SWD will fine-tune the proposal taking into account Members' comments, and consult the LegCo Panel on Welfare Services in December 2004. It aims to invite tenders for the services in early 2005/06, with a view to starting the services in the latter half of 2005/06.

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