

(Translation)

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**Elderly Commission  
Minutes of the 50th Meeting**

Room 2005, 20/F, Murray Building, Garden Road, Central  
2:30 p.m., 27 June 2007 (Wednesday)

**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 Han-pan

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

Miss Nancy LAW, JP

Director of Social Welfare (Acting)

Mr LAU Kai-hung, JP

Representative of Secretary for Housing, Planning and  
Lands / Director of Housing

Dr CHAN Wai-man, JP

Representative of Director of Health

Dr Daisy DAI  
Representative of Chief Executive of Hospital Authority

**In Attendance:**

Ms Sandra LEE, JP  
Permanent Secretary for Health and Welfare

Mr Stephen Fisher, JP  
Secretary to the Commission on Poverty (In Attendance for Agenda Item 5)

Mr FUNG Pak-yan  
Deputy Director of Social Welfare

Ms YIP Man-kuen, Carol, JP  
Deputy Secretary for Health, Welfare and Food

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

Mr FU Tsun Hung  
Chief Social Work Officer  
Social Welfare Department

Mrs Senna SMITH  
Executive Manager  
Social Welfare Department

Mrs KWOK LI Mung-ye, Helen  
Chief Social Work Officer (Acting)  
Social Welfare Department

Ms MAK Suk-kwan, Lorensa  
Senior Social Work Officer  
Social Welfare Department

Ms LEUNG Mei Wah  
Senior Social Work Officer  
Social Welfare Department

Mr YAM Mun-ho  
Senior Social Work Officer  
Social Welfare Department

Dr NG Ping-sum, Sammy  
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

Ms CHEUNG Chung-sze, Joyce      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  
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 the two representatives of the Social Welfare Department (SWD), Miss Nancy LAW, Acting Director of Social Welfare, and Mr FUNG Pak-yan, Deputy Director of Social Welfare, who attended the meeting of the Elderly Commission (EC) for the first time. After that, the Chairman proposed to include the *Domestic Violence (Amendment) Bill* in Agenda Item 5 (Any Other Business) which would be discussed later in the meeting.

**Agenda Item 1: Confirmation of the Minutes of the 49th Meeting**

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

**Agenda Item 2: Matters Arising**

**Paragraph 18 of the minutes of the 49th meeting**

3. The Chairman said that at the last meeting Members had discussed the

Government's initiative regarding the allocation of \$96 million for a pilot scheme to provide integrated discharge support for elderly patients in two districts for vulnerable elderly hospital discharges to obliterate the need for re-admission within a short span of time. To take the matter forward, the EC had set up a task group which had convened two meetings to deliberate and advise on matters such as the pilot scheme's objectives, target groups, service mode and resource utilisation, etc. Ms Carol YIP, Deputy Secretary for Health, Welfare and Food, told the meeting that the task group would convene its third meeting in July to conclude the discussions and recommendations. The Secretariat would report the details of the pilot scheme to Members in due course.

### **Agenda Item 3: Progress Report of the Working Group on Active Ageing**

4. The Chairman invited Prof Alfred Chan, Chairman of the Working Group on Active Ageing (WGAA), to report on the progress of the WGAA.

5. Prof Chan reported that the Secretariat has served as a coordinator on matters concerning the applications from 32 Elder Academies to the Education and Manpower Bureau (EMB) for the exemption from registration as a school. In parallel, the WGAA was also organising a series of competitions and activities to celebrate the 10th Anniversary of the establishment of Hong Kong SAR and promote active ageing, which included, among others, "Hong Kong Story", "Elder Community Works Project", "Media Award on Active Ageing" as well as the "Active Ageing Evening". The competitions would be completed in July, with prizes to be presented on 28 July at the "Active Ageing Evening". Prof Chan went on to brief Members about the theme of the "Active Ageing Evening" which was mainly to promote the concepts of inter-generational solidarity and active ageing. The message would be delivered through performances of and cooperation between the elders and the younger generation. He invited Members to attend and support the activity.

6. The Chairman added that the “Active Ageing Evening” was more than an occasion to celebrate the 10th Anniversary of the establishment of Hong Kong SAR; it was also an excellent opportunity to pay tribute to our elders for their substantial contributions to Hong Kong.

#### **Agenda Item 4: Progress Report of the Working Group on Long-Term Care Model**

##### **District-based trial scheme on carer training**

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7. The Chairman invited Dr LAM Ching-choi, Chairman of the Working Group on Long-term Care Model (WGLTCM), to report on the progress of the WGLTCM.

8. Members noted that, at the recommendation of the WGLTCM, the Health, Welfare and Food Bureau (HWFB) and the EC, would launch a “District-based trial scheme on elderly carer training” in three districts. Under the scheme, District Elderly Community Centres (DECCs) would be invited to join hands with community organisations in three selected districts to organise district-based elderly care basic training courses for individuals. Arrangements would also be made for those who had completed the training courses to serve as paid or volunteer “elderly sitters” in the districts. To encourage the participation of DECCs and community organisations in the pilot scheme, the HWFB would provide funding to three DECCs in each of the three districts to implement the scheme. The funding for each project was \$50,000. The SWD and the Department of Health had worked out a proposed course outline. Also, the HWFB would set out guidelines on the duties and responsibilities of “elderly sitters” for participating organisations’ reference.

9. On publicity, the launching of the pilot scheme would be announced at the “Active Ageing Evening” on 28 July. Coupled with that, outstanding participating organisations and

voluntary “elderly sitters” participating in the pilot scheme would be commended for their efforts at the Carers’ Recognition Ceremony to be held on 18 November this year.

10. Dr LAM said that the WGLTCM would organise visits for Members to see how home-based community care services and day care services were being provided.

11. Members discussed the shortage of nursing manpower in elderly services and put forward the following views:

- (i) The SWD had commissioned the Hospital Authority (HA) to run three rounds of the Enrolled Nurse Training Programme for the Welfare Sector in 2006 and 2007 respectively. Members hoped that the fourth and fifth rounds of the training programme, to be run by HA and commissioned by HWFB, could be expedited. Faced with keen competition from private hospitals and the HA which offered better pay to nursing graduates, Members envisaged that the residential care homes for the elderly (RCHEs) would still have difficulties in recruiting nurses.
- (ii) It was encouraging to note that the HA, in collaboration with various institutions, would organize a three-year higher diploma course to train registered nurses or an associate degree programme in nursing.
- (iii) The shortage of nursing manpower was not only resulted from inadequate training places or undersupply of nursing graduates, but also due to some structural problems, including training, grade structure and promotion prospects. In the longer run, the EC should reach a common view on the training of nursing manpower and forward their views to the Labour and Welfare Bureau (LWB).

(iv) Many elders were suffering from dementia, depression or other mental illnesses. In this connection, community psychiatric nursing service, which rendered community care to the mentally ill by a team of specially trained nurses of the HA, should be equipped and brought up-to-date to meet the changing needs of the community. Community psychiatric nurses should grow out of the primary role as frontline workers to become leaders. Hospitals might consider adopting a low-cost and high efficiency approach by using telephone services to follow up on cases involving elderly patients newly discharged from hospitals who were in need of care, with a view to enhancing the support network for these elders and minimising the need of their re-admission. A study in Italy showed that more frequent telephone calls from nurses to elders might help reduce the latter's suicide rate. Telephone care services operated by nurses should be further promoted.

12. Mrs Kathy NG, Assistant Director of Social Welfare, remarked that the three rounds of the enrolled nurses training programme for the welfare sector commissioned and run by the SWD and the HA respectively since 2006 would provide 300 enrolled nurse graduates. Also, another 500 to 600 graduates of Bachelor of Nursing would join the labour market in each of the coming few years. The Queen Elizabeth Hospital Nursing School and the School of Nursing of the Hong Kong Polytechnic University would each have over 100 nursing graduates from the higher diploma nursing programmes each year. She estimated that there would be a total of about 800 graduates from various nursing programmes in each year. The SWD would continue to work closely with the newly established LWB and the HA on nurse training.

13. Dr Susie LUM (who is also the Senior Executive Manager (Nursing) of HA) shared the concern about the demand for nursing staff in the elderly services sector and hoped that

the HA and SWD would sustain their joint efforts in the training of nursing professionals. She remarked that the HA had already enhanced the outreach service curriculum of its higher diploma programmes for registered nurses and that the HA would be happy to collaborate with other institutions to provide more training programmes and ensure that the nursing graduates could achieve a certain level of quality and capability. She said that as compared with general nurses, outreach psychiatric nurses required longer training time, now whose number had already increased from 50 to 170. On top of that, the training programmes on community psychiatric nursing care had also been revamped, resulting in an enhanced collaboration between outreach nurses and non-governmental organisations.

14. Ms Sandra LEE, Permanent Secretary for Health and Welfare, emphasised her concern about the supply of and demand for nursing staff. She added that the HWFB had also discussed with the HA on the development in this area and would continue to work with the EMB and Nursing Council of Hong Kong to explore the feasibility of training more enrolled nurses, in a bid to alleviate the work pressure of other frontline nursing staff.

#### **Agenda Item 5 : Any Other Business**

##### **I. Domestic Violence (Amendment) Bill 2007**

15. Ms Sandra LEE said that the HWFB had consulted EC Members' views on the proposed legislative amendments to the Domestic Violence Ordinance (DVO) at the 47th EC meeting and subsequently the Legislative Council, various advisory committees and stakeholders. Taking into account the views received, it had made a number of refinements to the legislative proposals. The HWFB would introduce the Amendment Bill into the Legislative Council on that day.



16. The scope of the DVO would be expanded, and in area related to elders, protection would be extended to cover parents and grandparents, etc. All protected persons, irrespective of whether they were residing with their abusive spouses or relatives, would come under the protection of the new law. With the enactment of the new legislation, protection to victims of domestic violence would be enhanced.

17. Ms Sandra LEE added that the newly established Labour and Welfare Bureau would follow up on the issues.

## **II. Study of Family Commission**

18. Ms Sandra LEE briefed Members on the background leading up to the study of setting up the Family Commission (FC) by the Government.

19. Ms Sandra LEE remarked that the study recommended the realignment of all relevant advisory bodies for more effective deployment of resources. She said that the report of the study team would be submitted to the Chief Executive by the end of June for consideration by the third-term SAR Government.

## **III. Commission on Poverty**

20. The Chairman invited Mr Stephen FISHER, Secretary to the Commission on Poverty (CoP), to brief the meeting on the CoP's studies and its views on elderly services.

21. Mr FISHER told Members that the CoP reckoned the community should continue to provide welfare assistance and a safety net to elders in need and other disadvantaged groups. For people with working ability, the community should enhance their employability and provide them with employment assistance so as to encourage them to move "from welfare to self-reliance". He then went on to introduce the work of the Ad Hoc Group on the Elderly in

Poverty established under the CoP in June 2006. In addition to conducting in-depth study on elders in poverty, the CoP also recommended the following improvement measures:

(i) Medical Services

The main concern of elders was the availability of affordable health care service. The CoP welcomed the Government's implementation of a pilot scheme to provide one-stop support service to elderly hospital discharges who had difficulties in looking after themselves so as to reduce their need for re-admission. The CoP also considered the existing medical fee waiver mechanism complicated and thus proposed that a degree of flexibility be built into the fee waiver mechanism for elders aged over 65.

(ii) Financial Security

The CoP had drawn reference to the three pillars retirement financial protection for Hong Kong, namely, publicly funded Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) and Old Age Allowance (OAA), Mandatory Provident Fund (MPF) schemes and voluntary private savings. It was found that many CSSA recipients were elders. The CoP proposed that the Government should consider setting a more relaxed asset limit for the elderly under the CSSA Scheme on compassionate grounds.

(iii) Residential Care Services

Given the inadequate supply of subsidised residential care services for elders, the Government should, apart from working out measures to promote the development of private RCHEs, identify means for effective deployment of resources and explore ways of co-payment of fees among the individuals,

their families and the Government, including, among others, the introduction of a means-tested voucher system and a means test to the subsidised elderly residential care service recipients.

(iv) Assistance to “Hidden Elders”

CoP had proposed that efforts to reach out to and identify “hidden” and singleton elders should be strengthened, with a view to bringing them out of isolation and referring the needy elders to existing public support network. The Government accepted the proposal and allocated an additional \$38 million in the 2007-08 budget to the elderly centres to enhance their outreach services to the singleton and hidden elders.

22. Mr FISHER said that the CoP had already submitted the aforementioned proposals to the HWFB for consideration and follow-up actions. EC Members generally agreed with the points raised in the briefing.

23. Member Prof Helen CHIU enquired whether elders were one of the target groups of outreach mental health services earmarked to be enhanced with an additional \$20 million in the 2007-08 budget and whether these elders included the singleton and hidden elders identified through the strengthened outreach services of the elderly centres. The HWFB undertook to find out the details.

**Date of Next Meeting**

24. The next EC meeting would be held on 27 September 2007 (Thursday).

## **Time of Adjournment**

25. The meeting was adjourned at 4:25 p.m.

4 July 2007