

Elderly Commission
Minutes of the 75th Meeting

Conference Room 1, G/F, Central Government Offices,
2 Tim Mei Avenue, Tamar, Hong Kong
10:30 a.m., 11 June 2013 (Tuesday)

Present:

Chairman

Prof CHAN Cheung-ming, Alfred, BBS, JP

Vice-chairman

Dr LAM Ching-choi, BBS, JP

Members

Dr CHAN Hon-wai, Felix, JP

Ms CHAN Man-ki, Maggie, MH

Mrs CHAN LUI Ling-ye, Lilian

Dr CHENG Kam-chung, JP, MH

Dr CHEUNG Moon-wah

Dr CHONG Ming-lin, Alice

Prof FUNG Yuk-kuen, Sylvia

Mr MA Ching-hang, Patrick, BBS, JP

Mr MA Kam-wah, Timothy, JP

Mr SHIE Wai-hung, Henry

Dr TUNG Sau-ying

Mrs WONG WONG Yu-sum, Doris

Mr WU Moon-hoi, Marco, SBS

Mr YAU How-boa, Stephen, BBS, JP, MH

Miss TAM Kam-lan, Annie, JP

Mr YUEN Ming-fai, Richard, JP

Mr FUNG Pak-yan, JP

Mr LIU King-leung, Tony

Dr LEUNG Sze-lee, Shirley

Dr MAW Kit-chee, Christina

Permanent Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Permanent Secretary for Food and Health
(Health)

Acting Director of Social Welfare

Assistant Director of Housing

Assistant Director of Health

Senior Executive Manager (Elderly and
Community Care), Hospital Authority

In attendance:

Mr CHEN Yee, Donald

Mrs CHAN NG Ting-ting, Elina

Deputy Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Principal Assistant Secretary for Labour and
Welfare

Miss LI Yuen-wah, Cecilla

Assistant Director of Social Welfare

Ms NG Lai-sheung, Ruby

Senior Social Work Officer, Social Welfare
Department

Ms POON Hau-yuk

Senior Social Work Officer, Social Welfare

Ms CHAN Sin-ye, Perin, Sindy	Department Acting Senior Social Work Officer, Social Welfare Department
Dr HO Chi-hin	Medical and Health Officer, Department of Health
Mr LIT Hoo-yin, Horace	Assistant Secretary for Labour and Welfare
Miss MOK Tik-shan, Elizabeth	Chief Executive Officer, Labour and Welfare Bureau
Miss HO Wing-wa, Vitinie	Executive Officer, Labour and Welfare Bureau

Agenda item 3

Ms TANG Pui-shan, Alice	Deputy Chief Executive – Social Service, the Yuen Yuen Institute
Prof LEE Kok-long, Joseph, SBS, JP	Head, Division of Nursing and Health Studies, The Open University of Hong Kong
Dr LEE Yin-king, Linda	Associate Head, Division of Nursing and Health Studies, The Open University of Hong Kong

Agenda item 4

Mrs KAO May-wan, Gwen	Chairman, Charles K. Kao Foundation for Alzheimer's Disease
Dr LO Wing-yan, William, JP	Governor and Executive Committee Member, Charles K. Kao Foundation for Alzheimer's Disease
Mr TONG Sai-wong, Alan	Governor and Executive Committee Member, Charles K. Kao Foundation for Alzheimer's Disease
Mr LEUNG Chi-hang, Wilfred	Manager, Charles K. Kao Foundation for Alzheimer's Disease

Absent with apologies:

Mr WONG Fan-foung, Jackson, MH

Secretary

Mr CHOW Wing-hang	Principal Assistant Secretary for Labour and Welfare
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Prof Alfred CHAN Cheung-ming, the Chairman, welcomed Members to the meeting, in particular Mr FUNG Pak-yan, Acting Director of Social Welfare. The Chairman also thanked Mr Patrick NIP Tak-kuen, former Director of Social Welfare, for his contribution to this Commission in the past years.

2. The Chairman reminded Members to make a declaration when there was a potential conflict of interest between their own interests and the matters to be discussed.

Agenda item 1: Confirmation of the minutes of the 74th meeting

3. As Members had not proposed any amendments to the Chinese and English versions of the draft minutes issued by the Secretariat on 27 May and 7 June 2013 respectively, the minutes were confirmed.

Agenda item 2: Matters arising

Paragraph 8 of the minutes of the 74th meeting

4. The Chairman said that the arrangements for this Commission's study trip to New York of the United States would be reported under agenda item 4.

Agenda item 3: Briefing on Pilot Training Programme for Multi-skills Workers for the Elderly Services Sector

5. The Chairman said that in response to the heavy demand for care workers in the elderly services sector, the Open University of Hong Kong (OUHK) had introduced the Diploma in Health Studies (Community Health Care) programme in 2012, and the Yuen Yuen Institute (YYI) would soon launch the "Youth Career Navigation Scheme in Elderly Services" (YCNSE) project to train care workers for the sector with a view to alleviating the shortage of manpower. He invited Dr Linda LEE Yin-king, Associate Professor of the Division of Nursing and Health Studies of OUHK and Ms Alice TANG Pui-shan, Deputy Chief Executive – Social Service of YYI to brief the meeting on the said programme and project respectively.

6. Dr LEE gave a powerpoint presentation on the background and features on the Diploma in Health Studies programme. She said that the major objective of the two-year part-time programme introduced in 2012 was to train people aged 18 or above who had completed Form 5 or equivalent and would like to make a career change to become community health workers. The training would allow them to provide comprehensive health care services for the elderly, persons with disabilities, patients suffering from non-communicable diseases, and mentally-ill people in the community. The Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust had granted \$10 million to the programme for the development of teaching materials and provision of scholarships for students with outstanding performance and financial difficulties. As the programme was recognised by the Social Welfare Department (SWD), students having completed the first year of study could apply to the SWD for registration as a health worker to work in residential care homes for the elderly or for persons with disabilities. Students who completed only the first year of the programme would be awarded the Certificate in Health Studies. Students who completed the two-year

programme would be awarded the Diploma in Health Studies and eligible to apply for OUHK's full-time higher diploma programmes in nursing in order to qualify as an Enrolled Nurse.

7. Ms TANG then gave a powerpoint presentation on the YCNSE project. She said that the project, financed by the Lotteries Fund, was carried out in collaboration with the Labour and Welfare Bureau (LWB), the SWD, private residential care homes for the elderly (RCHEs), government-subsidized RCHEs, contract RCHEs, the Lingnan University (LU) and the OUHK. Its objective was to encourage young people to join the long-term care market with a view to alleviating the shortage of care staff, particularly in the elderly service sector. By mapping out clear career pathways for its participants, the project intended to attract more young people to work in the elderly service sector and help them set early career goals to reduce the drop-out rate. The project had two phases, each of which would offer 100 places. Of the 200 places, 100 would be provided for young people aged 17 to 24 with educational attainment at sub-degree level or below, and the remaining 100 for those with Form 5 qualification plus at least one year of working experience. Enrolment for the first phase of the project commenced in June 2013. Ample job vacancies were reserved in private RCHEs to provide trainees with pre-service and on-the-job training so that they could learn and pick up the necessary job skills in parallel. Upon completion of the Induction Course, Care Worker Course and First Aid Certificate Course, eligible trainees could enrol in OUHK's Diploma in Health Studies in order to progress to a health worker. Trainees could further enrol in nurse training programmes to acquire recognised qualifications. Under the reimbursement mechanism of the project, trainees would receive full reimbursement of tuition fees after serving in their respective posts for a specified period of time.

8. After the briefing, the Chairman and Members raised the following questions and views:

- (a) It was pleased to learn that the Government, YYI, OUHK, LU and private RCHEs joined hands in launching the YCNSE project. By drawing up pathways for those who wish to pursue a career in the care services, the project would attract more young people to join the profession and help address the manpower shortage in the provision of long-term care (particularly in RCHEs).
- (b) How many students had enrolled in the Diploma in Health Studies programme? What were the background of most students?
- (c) How many students had enrolled in the YCNSE project?

- (d) It was suggested that YYI should discuss with the operators of the private RCHEs participating in the YCNSE project the possibility of further raising the trainees' wage to \$8,000 or above to make the project more attractive to young people.
- (e) It was suggested that YYI could brief the Secondary School Principals Association of 18 Districts on the YCNSE project so that they might encourage students due to leave school to participate in the project and join the long-term care sector. It was also suggested that publicity should focus on the career pathways drawn up under the project and the arrangements to facilitate students' further enrolment for the Diploma in Health Studies programme of OUHK so that young people would be well aware that the project would allow them to take part in OUHK's study programme and lead them to a promising career.
- (f) According to the leaflet of the YCNSE project, holders of the Diploma in Health Studies would be employed as a "Multi-skills Care Officer" rather than a "Multi-skills Care Worker". Was there such a job title known as "Multi-skills Care Officer" in the elderly service sector? There was also concern that the job title might give students the possible misconception that they would not be required to perform primary care duties after they were employed as a care officer.

9. Dr LEE and Miss TANG responded as follows:

- (a) The first Diploma in Health Studies programme attracted more than 100 applications and a total of 60 applicants were admitted. Among the enrolled students, the youngest one aged 18 and the most senior one was over 50. The average age was around 30. As the programme was conducted on a part-time basis, over half of the students were working persons, including nurse assistants and care assistants in hospitals. There were also applicants who were unable to pursue further studies due to unsatisfactory results in the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (HKDSE) Examination in the previous year, and those serving in other fields, such as security guards. They would like to join the care service sector or make a career change by joining the programme. Since many people still had doubts about the career prospects of care workers, the response to the Programme was not very enthusiastic. However, with the introduction of the "Pilot Scheme on Community Care Service Voucher for the Elderly", there would be a clearer picture of the community's demand for long-term care services, which would in turn promote the prospects and career pathways for the care service sector.

- (b) Pending the release of the results of HKDSE Examination scheduled for 15 July 2013, many fresh graduates adopted a wait-and-see attitude and had yet to sign up for the YCNSE project. So far, only seven had applied, with another nine potential participants.

(Post-meeting follow-up: As of 9 August 2013, the YCNSE project received a total of 128 applications. Amongst them, 45 applicants had enrolled in the Diploma in Health Studies (Community Health Care) programme of OUHK and 5 applicants were still considering whether to join the programme. The remaining 78 applicants withdrew their applications due to engagement in other jobs or participation in other study programmes.)

- (c) YYI had introduced the YCNSE project to the young people participating in the Special Training and Enhancement Programme, Support for Self-reliance Scheme, and Youth Pre-employment Training Programme and Youth Work Experience and Training Scheme. The project would also be promoted in the publication “Recruit” and career fairs.

- (d) Members of the Lotteries Fund Advisory Committee had suggested that the YCNSE project should be re-packaged to attract more young people. In view of this, the job title “Multi-skills Care Worker” was renamed as “Multi-skills Care Officer” to render a more positive job image.

(Post-meeting follow-up: (1) - To avoid the possible misconception the job title “Multi-skills Care Officer” might give to the students, the leaflet of the YCNSE project had been revised as: “Holders of the Diploma in Health Studies would possess the “multi-skills qualification”. (2) – The monthly wage of the trainees had been raised to \$8,200 or above.)

Agenda item 4: Briefing on the needs for dementia public education in Hong Kong

10. Dr William LO Wing-yan, Governor and Executive Committee Member of the Charles K. Kao Foundation for Alzheimer’s Disease (Foundation), gave a powerpoint presentation on the needs for dementia public education in Hong Kong. Dr LO pointed out that according to the statistics published by the World Health Organisation (WHO) in 2011, dementia and Alzheimer’s disease were the fourth top killer in the world. Dementia was currently ranked eighth among the 10 leading causes of death in Hong Kong, and about 895 persons died of dementia in 2012. However, the figure was likely to be understated as many elderly people suffering from dementia had not been properly diagnosed before they passed away. At present, over 10% of the elderly people aged 70 years or above in Hong Kong suffered from dementia. They placed not only an economic burden on the community but also psychological, practical and financial strains on their families. With an ageing

population, the impact of dementia on society would aggravate. As such, it was necessary to enhance public's awareness and understanding of dementia. The Foundation aimed to provide support for dementia patients, their families and caregivers, as well as to arouse public understanding and awareness of dementia. To enhance the well-being of the families of dementia patients and promote the development of services for caregivers of dementia patients in Hong Kong, the Foundation had launched the "Reaching out Dementia Caregiver Support Project" in collaboration with the Hong Kong Council of Social Services, the University of Hong Kong, the National Institute of Aging of the United States and elderly service organisations. It was hoped that the stress caregivers faced could be further relieved and their mental health promoted through systematic assessments, counselling service, and provision of information about the proper techniques of taking care of dementia patients and community support. In addition, the Foundation also partnered with the Hong Kong Jockey Club in launching the "CADENZA Community Project: Jockey Club Charles Kao Brain Health Services". The project featured a mobile service vehicle equipped with counselling and functional rooms where interview with a patient's family and preliminary assessment could be conducted at the same time. The vehicle provided free one-stop services for persons with suspected memory problems, dementia patients as well as their families.

11. Dr LO said that early diagnosis of dementia would result in lower cost of medical treatment. Hence, it was imperative to enhance public education on dementia. As the number of elderly people suffering from dementia would continue to increase with an ageing population, pressure would be built up on our healthcare system, and a heavy burden would be imposed on our public finance as well as the livelihood of the patients' families. He suggested that the Government should expedite the formulation of related policies to meet the challenges brought by dementia.

12. Mrs Gwen KAO May-wan, Chairman of the Foundation, said that as a caregiver of a dementia patient herself, she fully understood the immense pressure faced by caregivers. For grassroots carers or those with little knowledge about dementia, the pressure they faced was unimaginable. She hoped that the Government would step up publicity efforts and public education on dementia to raise public awareness in this respect.

13. Mr Richard YUEN Ming-fai, Permanent Secretary for Food and Health, said that the Review Committee on Mental Health (Review Committee) had been set up by the Food and Health Bureau (FHB) in May 2013. Chaired by the Secretary for Food and Health, the Review Committee aimed to provide a platform for relevant government departments (including the LWB and SWD) to work together to review the existing policies and services on mental health. Dementia would be one of the subjects to be studied.

14. Members raised the following questions and views:

- (a) This Commission could provide advice to the Review Committee whenever necessary.
- (b) As for the support for caregivers, the Community Care Fund was considering the introduction of “Carer Allowance” as a means of relieving their burden.
- (c) It was suggested that apart from enhancing public education on dementia, on-the-job training should also be provided to social workers who were required to serve the elderly so as to increase their understanding and awareness of dementia. On the other hand, thematic seminars could be conducted to heighten the awareness of various front-liners in the community (including District Councillors and police constables etc.) so that they could identify persons suffering from dementia effectively and refer such cases to the Hospital Authority or relevant organisations for follow-up actions.
- (d) It was suggested that the Social Workers Registration Board should, in approving new training programmes, require the programmes to include dementia as a compulsory module.
- (e) It was suggested to promote the public awareness on dementia via the “Healthy and Safe City Networks” which had already been established in various districts.
- (f) Elderly centres could also serve as a platform for promoting dementia services. Hence, as far as the long-term development of elderly centres was concerned, the Government should consider allocating additional resources to enhance the services of these centres so that they could also provide dementia patients with supporting services.
- (g) The provision of elderly service facilities should be incorporated into the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines to cope with the service demand arising from an ageing population.
- (h) The World Health Organization (WHO) had released a report on public health priorities in which practices adopted by various countries were reviewed. It was suggested to make reference to this report when planning for the provision of dementia services.

15. Mr Tony LIU King-leung, Assistant Director of Housing Department (HD), said that the Estate Management Advisory Committees under the Hong Kong Housing Authority would allocate funding annually for non-government organizations to hold partnering

functions within public housing estates. As such, the Foundation was most welcome to contact the HD if it intended to hold any promotional activities in public housing estates.

16. The Chairman thanked the representatives of the Foundation for the briefing. He hoped that the Foundation would keep in touch with this Commission in the future.

Agenda item 5: Any other business

Arrangements for study trip to New York

17. Mr CHOW Wing-hang, Secretary of this Commission, said that the New York Academy of Medicine had worked out a preliminary itinerary for the study trip. Upon collating the relevant information, the Secretariat would circulate the itinerary for Members' reference and comments.

18. The Chairman suggested that Members taking part in the study trip to New York should make group observations and study of the eight domains of living as proposed in WHO's Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities so as to formulate the way forward and provide advice for the Age-friendly project of Hong Kong. Furthermore, members would report and share the experience gained from the study trip at the conference marking the 65th Anniversary of the Hong Kong Housing Society to be held on 30 October 2013.

Work progress of the Committee on Elder Academy Development Foundation

19. Mr CHOW said that the first round of funding applications for the Elder Academy Development Foundation (the Foundation) for 2013-14 was closed on 31 May 2013. The Secretariat had received a total of three applications. The Vetting Sub-committee under the Foundation Committee would meet later to vet the applications.

Date of next meeting

20. The next meeting was tentatively scheduled for 9 September 2013.

Time of adjournment

21. The meeting was adjourned at 1:20 p.m.

August 2013