

The 68th Meeting of the Elderly Commission
Press Summary

The Elderly Commission held its 68th meeting today (24 October 2011) with the following items on the agenda:

(1) Briefing on relevant initiatives in the 2011-12 Policy Address

Elderly care and support

- The Commission welcomed the new initiatives relating to elderly care services in the Chief Executive's 2011-12 Policy Address, and supported the Government's policy objective of "ageing in place as the core, institutional care as back-up".
- The Commission was pleased to note that the Government had accepted the Commission's recommendation to introduce a pilot scheme on community care service voucher, whereby subsidy would be provided directly to elders so that they could choose the community care services they needed. The Commission believed that this scheme could encourage different types of service providers to join the market, which was conducive to the development of elderly care services in Hong Kong.
- The Commission also welcomed other elderly care-related initiatives of the Government, including increasing subsidised community and residential care places, upgrading the quality of homes participating in the Enhanced Bought Place Scheme, providing a new monthly Residential Care Supplement of \$250 for elders on Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) who lived in non-subsidised residential care places, and enhancing the support for demented elders through raising the Dementia Supplement for service providers.
- The Commission considered the Guangdong Scheme, which enabled Hong Kong elders who chose to move to Guangdong to receive Old Age Allowance (OAA) there, a positive response to the community's demand. The Commission was also pleased to note that the Government would enable persons aged 65 or above to travel on the general Mass Transit Railway lines, franchised buses and ferries anytime at a concessionary fare of \$2 per trip. The Commission believed that this measure could help

promote active ageing.

- The Committee agreed that it was not easy for the community to reach a consensus on a universal retirement protection scheme, and was pleased to note that the Government was studying ways to enhance the existing retirement protection system. Meanwhile, the Commission noted that the Government would provide an extra one-off payment to recipients of CSSA, OAA and Disability Allowance, which would help ease the burden of elders concerned.

Healthcare

- The Commission welcomed the Government's initiative to adopt a three-pronged approach in taking forward the Health Protection Scheme based on the outcome of the public consultation on Healthcare Reform, with a view to ensuring the sustainable development of our healthcare system.
- The Commission welcomed the Government's initiative to increase substantially the public health expenditure to improve public healthcare services, and to allocate additional funds for the Hospital Authority (HA) to enhance services for the elderly including cataract removal, haemodialysis, joint replacement and mental health services, etc.
- The Commission welcomed the Government's initiatives to build more hospitals, strengthen the provision of various primary care services, and take forward various pilot projects (including the subsidy scheme for the elderly to receive seasonal influenza and pneumococcal vaccinations, the extended and enhanced Elderly Healthcare Voucher Pilot Scheme, and the provision of outreach primary dental care and oral health care services for the elderly residing in residential care homes or receiving services in day care centres). The Commission also welcomed the Government's initiative to promote preventive care for the elderly through piloting a health assessment programme in collaboration with voluntary agencies.

(2) Hospital Authority's Consultation Paper on "Elderly People Service Plan 2011-2016"

- The Commission appreciated that HA attached great importance to

improving elderly healthcare. HA's consultation document "Elderly People Service Plan 2011-16" presented to EC today was a result of HA's hard work for more than a year in engaging stakeholders and collating expert views. The Commission welcomed the Plan, in particular the strategy of improving elderly healthcare services through cross-sector collaboration, which was a policy direction all along supported by the Commission.

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