

## **43<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of the Elderly Commission** **Press Summary**

The Elderly Commission (EC) held its 43<sup>rd</sup> meeting today (26 September 2005). It was the first meeting chaired by Dr. Che-hung Leong, with the participation of other newly appointed members. The Secretary for Health, Welfare and Food, Dr. York Chow also joined the meeting. Major items on the agenda were as follows: -

### **Working Priorities for the Elderly Commission in 2005/06**

- To set working priorities for the coming 12 months, Members took stock of the existing elderly policies and measures, the key issues in elderly care and the challenges ahead. Members agreed that the Commission should:
  - (a) set up three Working Groups to deliberate further on:
    - the long-term care (LTC) model for elderly services. This will also examine the interface between medical/healthcare and social welfare in elderly services as well as LTC financing;
    - active ageing; and
    - financial security for elders.
  - (b) Members further agreed that the Working Groups on LTC Model and Active Ageing will start work immediately. The Working Group on Financial Security for Elders will start work in early 2006 to dovetail with the study being led by the Central Policy Unit on the sustainability of the financial security model for the ageing population in Hong Kong.

### **Enrolled Nurse Training Programme for the Welfare Sector**

- Members noted that
  - there is continuous feedback from the welfare sector on care staff shortage and their strong plead for measures, in particular the training of additional ENs, to alleviate the dire situation;
  - existing frontline care staff in the welfare sector should be given opportunities to upgrade their skills and widen their prospect of advancement; and

- the quality of care of the elders should be maintained with the supply of adequate care staff.
- Members welcomed the Administration’s initiative to proactively address the nursing shortage problems which the welfare sector, in particular the operators of the residential care homes for the elderly (RCHEs), are facing.
- Members further noted that the Social Welfare Department with the assistance of the Hospital Authority will launch a two-year full-time welfare-oriented training course to train Enrolled Nurses (ENs) for the welfare sector. About 110 EN training places will be provided, with priority accorded to individuals currently working in the sector. Tuition fees will be subsidized by SWD, and graduates will have to work in the welfare sector for at least two years after graduation. The course is scheduled for commencement in early 2006. Detailed arrangements are being worked out in consultation with stakeholders.

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