

Message

Investment in health care services is an investment in our future. A healthy population is a prerequisite for increased productivity and continuing growth. Over the past years, we have made improvements to the quality of public health care by upgrading patient facilities, introducing new technologies and clinical procedures, enhancing professional standards and competence through continuous education and training, improving the physical environment of hospitals and clinics, implementing new management measures and most importantly, by instilling a patient-centred care culture among the staff.

With a growing and ageing population, advances in medical technology and ever-rising public expectations for quality care, the demand for health care services will increase. We will continue in our efforts to provide access to good quality health care services by investing in our public medical infrastructure and ensuring the availability of qualified and competent health care professionals.

The health care system embraces both the public and private sectors. Both must work together to safeguard and promote the health of our community. The current heavily-subsidised public health care system, which takes up about 92% of the in-patient service workload, may prove to be financially unsustainable in the long term. We are pressing forward with a comprehensive review of our existing health care system. We will be considering options to achieve better sharing of the workload between the public and private sectors. We hope to provide a sustainable system which ensures that everyone can continue to have access to quality health care at an affordable price in the future.



(Mrs Katherine Fok)

Secretary for Health and Welfare

Curative Services

Our Policy Objective is to provide quality, affordable and accessible curative services.

Our targets in pursuing this Policy Objective are –

- to ensure adequate provision of medical services to cater for population growth
- to improve customer satisfaction in public hospital services, and measure it through regular customer opinion surveys

Key Result Areas (KRAs)

To ensure that this Policy Objective can be achieved, we must deliver results in a number of key areas, that is, we must –

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The following sections of this booklet explain the importance of these KRAs, describe the broad thrust of our efforts, and outline the indicators which we are using to assess progress. Each section lists the new key initiatives being taken to achieve our objectives and pinpoints the agency accountable for each initiative and the specific targets which we intend to meet.

I

Review the needs and modes of health care services

Our public health care services are heavily-subsidised by general revenue. Given that we have a growing and ageing population, that our recurrent public health care expenditure already represents 14.6% of total public recurrent expenditure and the general constraints on resources available to the public sector, our present level of subsidy may prove unsustainable in the long term. To ensure that quality health care can continue to be provided at a price that both individuals and the community can afford, the Health and Welfare Bureau is undertaking a comprehensive review of the health care financing and delivery system in Hong Kong. As part of the review, an overseas consultant has been appointed to carry out a study of the existing system and to recommend reform options for consideration by the Government.

Indicators

Our indicators of progress in this area are –

- establishment of a set of Domestic Health Accounts in 1999 to show the amount of funds provided by different sources (e.g. Government, employers, donations or individuals) for the health care system and on what services these funds are spent on
- commencement of public consultation on reform options for Hong Kong's health care system in 1999

Initiatives	Targets
<p>To establish the Hong Kong Domestic Health Accounts as the basis for evaluation and monitoring of our health care system <i>(Health and Welfare Bureau (HWB))*</i></p>	<p>To release findings of the first Domestic Health Accounts in 1999</p>
<p>To complete a consultancy study as the first step in a comprehensive review of the health care financing and delivery system in Hong Kong <i>(HWB)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To complete the consultancy study by end 1998 ● To consider the reform options recommended by the consultancy in 1999 ● To commence a public consultation exercise on the way forward within 1999

* the brackets denote the agency with lead responsibility for the initiative

II

Ensure that a supportive legislative and policy framework is in place

In the health care sector, we require a firm legislative framework to help safeguard public health and to ensure professional competence. In the coming years, we will continue to build on the solid foundation of existing policy and legislation by enacting new laws or amending existing legislation, as appropriate.

Indicators

Our indicators of progress in this area are –

- how effectively we can legislate to support the registration and self-discipline of health care professionals
- effective regulation of the provision of health care services

Initiatives

To put in place statutory measures to ensure that human reproductive technology will be safely practised
(Health and Welfare Bureau (HWB))

Targets

- We introduced the Human Reproductive Technology Bill into the Legislative Council in September 1998 and will set up the statutory Council on Human Reproductive Technology in 1999
- To issue in early 1999 to all relevant parties a voluntary code of practice, which will provide detailed guidelines for service providers on reproductive technology and embryo research

Initiatives	Targets
<p>To put in place a statutory framework for regulation and control of Chinese Medicine <i>(HWB)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● To introduce the Chinese Medicine Bill in the 1998-1999 legislative session to enable the establishment of a statutory Chinese Medicine Council before the end of 1999● To commence the registration of Chinese Medicine practitioners and to phase in controls over the use, trading and manufacture of Chinese Medicines in 2000



Ensure the availability of qualified, competent and committed health care professionals to deliver quality medical services

Hong Kong at present has a total of about 8 300 registered doctors and 38 000 registered nurses. It is important to keep the demand for additional health care professionals under regular review, and we shall take measures to do this in order to initiate action to fill manpower gaps once identified, and to upgrade levels of competence and skills in the profession.

Indicators

Our indicators of progress in this area are –

- the amount of continuous training that we can provide for health care professionals
- the amount of manpower information on health care professionals which we have obtained and collated

Initiatives

Targets

To promote the practice of family medicine by providing more training opportunities

(Hospital Authority (HA))

To train 30 family medicine physicians in 1999-2000 to strengthen “gate-keeping” functions and to reduce unnecessary referrals to specialist services

To improve the training of doctors by conducting in-service training programmes

(HA)

To provide in-service training to 4 000 doctors in 1999-2000

Initiatives	Targets
<p>To promote nursing competence by providing in-service and post-registration training to nurses <i>(HA)</i></p>	<p>To provide in-service and post-registration training to 7 000 nursing staff in 1999-2000</p>
<p>To improve the training of allied health professionals by conducting in-service training programmes <i>(HA)</i></p>	<p>To provide in-service training to 3 000 allied health professionals in 1999-2000</p>
<p>To enhance standards of pharmaceutical service in Department of Health clinics through regular reviews of dispensing procedures and recruitment of additional professional staff <i>(Department of Health)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To provide 23 additional dispensing staff in 1999-2000 to cope with increased workloads and complexity of work, and to ensure that proper dispensing procedures and checking mechanisms are followed ● To provide five additional pharmacists in 1999-2000 to provide professional advice and support to the pharmacies of the Department

IV

Ensure the availability of adequate medical facilities to meet the health care needs of the community

The Hospital Authority and the Department of Health provide a full range of in-patient, out-patient, ambulatory and community-based services, operating 42 public hospitals, 73 general out-patient clinics and 82 specialist out-patients clinics. In the light of a growing population as well as rising community expectations, we will continue to invest in our public medical infrastructure and introduce new services to cope with demographic and socio-economic changes in Hong Kong.

Indicators

Our indicators of progress in this area are –

- the number of hospital beds, day beds and day places available in Hospital Authority institutions
- the public hospital bed occupancy rate
- the waiting time for public specialist out-patient services

Initiatives

Targets

To increase the number of public hospital beds by 853 to 28 397
(Hospital Authority (HA))

To provide 853 additional public hospital beds in 1999-2000

To redevelop and expand Pok Oi Hospital to meet the rising demand for services in the Northern New Territories
(HA)

To complete the redevelopment and increase the number of beds in Pok Oi Hospital by 272 to 742 by 2006

Initiatives	Targets
To establish a radiotherapy centre with 68 in-patient beds and out-patient facilities at Princess Margaret Hospital <i>(HA)</i>	To open the centre by 2003