
Health and Welfare Bureau

I. Health

In the past year, we have been working on 31 pledges, of which :

- we have completed eight;
- we are on schedule on 14;
- we have encountered some slippage but are likely to meet our targets on one;
- we are taking active measures to speed up the progress on five which are behind schedule; and
- we are pressing ahead with three on-going commitments.

The following sets out the detailed report for each main programme area.

Public Health Protection

<i>Year</i>	<i>Pledge</i>	<i>Present Position</i>
Action Completed		
1997	1. To introduce legislation in 1998-1999 to regulate the practice of human reproductive technology.	A bill was introduced into the Legislative Council on 9 September 1998.
1996	2. In 1997, to prevent commercial trading of human organs by regulating, through the Human Organ Transplant Board, organ transplants among non-related living donors and those involving imported organs.	The Human Organ Transplant Board commenced handling applications when the entire Human Organ Transplant Ordinance came into effect on 1 April 1998.

Action in Progress : On Schedule

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| 1997 | 3. | <p>To introduce a bill in the next legislative session to establish a statutory framework to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – recognise the professional status of traditional Chinese medicine practitioners; – assess their professional qualifications; – monitor their standards of practice; and – regulate the use, manufacture and sale of Chinese medicine. | <p>Drafting instructions have been issued and the Chinese Medicine Bill is being drafted. We aim to introduce the Bill into the Legislature in the first quarter of 1999.</p> |
| 1997 | 4. | <p>To review in 1998-1999 the Pharmacy and Poisons Ordinance to bring it up-to-date and to make its provisions easier to administer.</p> | <p>The review is underway with only a few issues remaining to be addressed. As a next step, relevant parties will be consulted on the proposed amendments to the Ordinance.</p> |
| 1997 | 5. | <p>To review the Dentists Registration Ordinance in 1998-1999 to bring it up-to-date.</p> | <p>The Working Group has completed a preliminary review of the Dentists Registration Ordinance. Dental professions are being consulted on the proposed legislative amendments.</p> |

Action in Progress : Behind Schedule

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| 1996 | 6. | <p>To prevent abuse of controlled substances by stepping up investigation and prosecution of the illegal sale of controlled medicines. In 1997-1998, we will increase the number of inspections from 700 to 800 licensed premises per month by recruiting additional staff.</p> | <p>Ten new posts have been created and seven posts have been filled. The number of inspections will be increased to 800 licensed premises per month when the three vacancies are filled by end October.</p> |
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| 1996 | 7. | In 1997-1998, to increase the transparency of the Nursing Board of Hong Kong and Midwives Board of Hong Kong by introducing amendments to the Nurses Registration Ordinance and Midwives Registration Ordinance in 1997 to expand the composition of the Boards. | The Midwives Registration (Amendment) Ordinance and Nurses Registration (Amendment) Ordinance were enacted in 1997. Drafting instructions for the subsidiary legislation have been issued. The subsidiary legislation is expected to be introduced by end 1998 and the Boards expanded in early 1999. |
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Prevention Of Diseases

<i>Year</i>	<i>Pledge</i>	<i>Present Position</i>
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Action in Progress : On Schedule

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| 1997 | 1. | In 1998-1999, to strengthen our team of expert staff for the prevention and control of communicable diseases and take a more active role in global surveillance and monitoring of disease patterns. These efforts will enable the Department of Health to obtain more timely information on seasonal disease trends and to give timely health advice to the community. | We aim to make a submission to the Establishment Sub-Committee of the Finance Committee of the Legislative Council by the end of 1998 for the creation of nine additional posts. In parallel, the disease surveillance programme has been strengthened, with information flow and dissemination enhanced through various channels including Internet access. |
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Curative Care

<i>Year</i>	<i>Pledge</i>	<i>Present Position</i>
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Action Completed

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| 1996 | 1. | In 1997, to set up a sleep disorder centre to provide medical assessment and treatment to 100 patients with sleep disorders. | We have set up the centre and have provided medical treatment and assessment to 100 patients with sleep disorders in 1997. |
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| 1996 | 2. | In 1997, to improve quality control for bone grafting by setting up bone banks in five hospitals to serve 100 patients requiring bone grafts. | We have set up five bone banks and have treated 100 patients requiring bone grafts in 1997. |
| 1996 | 3. | To proceed with planning and design of the next phase of redevelopment of Castle Peak Hospital. | Design works on the Phase II redevelopment of Castle Peak Hospital is in progress, with construction started in April 1998 for completion in mid-2004. |
| 1996 | 4. | In 1997-1998, to strengthen child psychiatric services by providing specialist consultation each year to an additional 2 000 children with psychiatric disorders, as well as enhancing interaction between parents and children during the treatment process. | We have provided specialist consultation to an additional 2 000 children with psychiatric disorder in 1997-1998. |
| 1994 | 5. | To provide an extra 48 hospice beds over the next four years, by 1998-1999, to enable 1 000 more patients with terminal illnesses each year to live out the remainder of their lives in comfort and dignity. | Since October 1994, we have provided 48 additional hospice beds for patients with terminal illnesses. |
| 1993 | 6. | To spend \$565 million from 1994 to 1997 on the Hospital Improvement Programme to renovate buildings, modernise operating theatres, extend air-conditioning and improve support facilities, initially at 13 hospitals. | We have completed improvement works in all 13 hospitals by end 1997. |

Action in Progress : On Schedule

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| 1997 | 7. | <p>To carry out a comprehensive review of our existing health care system during 1998. In the review, we will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – examine how to achieve a better interface among primary health care, specialist out-patient and hospital in-patient services; – review whether the existing split of workload between the public and private sectors is reasonable; and – study how patients and the community can best share our health care costs. | <p>The Consultant has completed data collection and discussed preliminary proposals. We expect to receive the full report before end 1998.</p> |
| 1997 | 8. | <p>To provide an additional 754 hospital beds and 40 day places in 1998-1999. To continue to make plans for new hospital services and for redevelopment and refurbishment of existing hospital facilities in order to meet projected requirements.</p> | <p>We have already provided an additional 328 hospital beds and 40 day places since April 1998. We remain on target to provide an additional 754 hospital beds and 40 day places in 1998-1999.</p> |
| 1997 | 9. | <p>In 1998, to provide additional consultations for the evening and public holiday clinic services.</p> | <p>Additional evening and public holiday consultations have been provided for four more clinics. Services in three other clinics are expected to be enhanced by December.</p> |

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| 1996 | 10. | To complete construction of Tseung Kwan O Hospital by mid-1999. | We have completed the reinforced concrete superstructure of the hospital as well as the installation of lifts, rooftop chillers and power supply. We remain on schedule to complete construction of the hospital by mid-1999. |
| 1994 | 11. | To reduce the average queuing time at all specialist clinics from 120 minutes to 60 minutes by the year 2000. | With the use of a more reliable data collection methodology, our current assessment of the queuing time for consultation is less than 90 minutes in 90% of specialist clinics. We will continue to work towards a shorter waiting time. |
| 1994 | 12. | To reduce the average waiting time for all non-urgent operations from nine months to four months by the year 2000. | We have maintained the average waiting time for major non-urgent operations (in General Surgery, Orthopaedics, Obstetrics & Gynaecology) at six months or less. We will continue to work towards a shorter waiting time. |
| 1992 | 13. | To install air conditioners and other amenities in the waiting areas of general clinics. | Air conditioners have been installed in nine clinics this year, making a total of 54 clinics (or 86% of all general out-patient clinics in the Department of Health) having air conditioners installed in the waiting areas. Plans for installation in three more clinics are being implemented. |

Action in Progress : A Pledge to Catch Up

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| 1994 | 14. | To reduce the average waiting time for first appointment at all specialist clinics from eight weeks to five weeks by the year 2000. | Despite an increase of over 90% in the number of patients on the waiting list since 1994, we have maintained the average waiting time for first appointment at less than three months at 90% of specialist clinics. Measures have been introduced to increase the number of consultations for first appointment. We will monitor the impact of these measures on the average waiting time and continue to work towards a shorter waiting time. |
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Action in Progress : Behind Schedule

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| 1997 | 15. | In 1998 to open a new general out-patient clinic at Kowloon Bay Primary Health Care Centre. | Owing to poor performance of the contractor and bad weather, the project is estimated to be about four months behind schedule. Tentative date of completion of building works is March 1999. The Architectural Services Department will closely supervise the contractor to mitigate slippage. Tentative date for commencement of service is June 1999. |
| 1997 | 16. | To establish an integrated day treatment centre for patients with skin diseases, sexually transmitted diseases or HIV/AIDS at the Kowloon Bay Primary Health Care Centre in 1998. | Please refer to the position of item 15 above. |
| 1997 | 17. | To set up in 1998 a radiography centre at the Kowloon Bay Primary Health Centre which will handle 27 000 cases a year. | Please refer to the position of item 15 above. |

Good progress has been made with the following commitment in the past year. We will continue to work on it on an on-going basis.

<i>Year</i>	<i>Pledge</i>
1993	18. To offer nurses additional training within the Hospital Authority and the Department of Health.

Promotion of Health

<i>Year</i>	<i>Pledge</i>	<i>Present Position</i>
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Action in Progress : On Schedule

1997	1. To enhance health promotion programmes in 1998-1999 to advocate self-care and a healthy lifestyle so as to delay on-set of chronic illnesses.	A series of health promotion programmes has been planned.
1997	2. To implement in 1998-1999 the new anti-smoking measures which have been provided for by legislation.	Some of the new measures were implemented from 1 April 1998 and 1 July 1998 respectively.
1996	3. To improve public health by encouraging, through the Hong Kong Council on Smoking and Health (COSH), private organisations and employers to follow the Government's example and make their workplaces smoke-free.	COSH held a Smoke-free Workplace Seminar in March 1998 and is encouraging companies to sign the "Smoke-free Workplace Charter". More than 40 companies became signatories of the Charter in the first nine months of 1998.

Good progress has been made with the following commitments in the past year. We will continue to work on them on an on-going basis.

<i>Year</i>	<i>Pledge</i>
1994	4. To promote preventive health care.
1994	5. To maintain our campaign of public education on AIDS and ensure that AIDS patients continue to have access to a full range of government and community-based support services.