

**Presentation by Secretary for Health and Welfare  
at the Special Meeting of the Finance Committee  
on Thursday, 22 March 2001**

Mr Chairman,

In the coming year, we propose to allocate **\$65.31 billion** for health and welfare services to meet our targets in these policy areas as well as to support the work of the Women's Commission. This represents **22.5%** of the Total Public Expenditure.

<b>Health</b>
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To maintain and improve our health services, we propose to spend **\$31.8 billion** on recurrent expenditure – a net real growth of **+3.2%** after absorbing the **2%** Enhanced Productivity Programme reductions.

As recommended in the Consultation Paper on Health Care Reform, one of our priorities in coming years is to enhance the effectiveness of our primary care and to develop community-based integrated services. These efforts will help improve our patients' quality of life and slow down the rapid increases in health costs.

The Department of Health will, in 2001-02, initiate a new adolescent health programme, conduct a survey to assess the community's oral health status, develop a cervical screening programme for women, strengthen our anti-smoking efforts and promote healthy ageing through proper diet and regular exercise.

In 2001-02, the Hospital Authority (HA) will open 569 new beds to meet in-patient needs. It will pilot the practice of family medicine in 5 general out-patient clinics to be transferred from DH. The Community Psychiatric Service will be significantly extended, increasing the total number of outreach services attendances by **14%** to about 96 000. An additional 2 500 patients will be provided with new psychiatric drugs, which will improve their quality of life.

<b>Social Welfare</b>
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In 2001-02, we propose to spend for social welfare policy **\$30.2 billion** to achieve a real growth of **9.3%** over the current year. This will account for **13.8%** of Total Recurrent Public Expenditure.

<b>Elderly Services</b>
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Next year, we will spend **\$3.2 billion** on direct welfare services for older

persons, **16%** increase compared with 2000-01. With the additional resources, we will provide an additional 2 541 subsidized residential care places through a mixed mode of provision, involving both the subvented and private sectors.

To enable frail older persons to age at home instead of admission to residential care homes, these frail older persons will continue to live at home and receive integrated day and community care services in accordance with their needs. Next year, we will provide additional resources to provide such services to another 2 500 frail older persons.

We will also provide additional resources to the Community Geriatric Assessment Teams of the HA to enable them to pay visit to the great majority of elderly care homes in Hong Kong.

### Social Security

We propose **\$20.5 billion** for financial assistance to those in need, including **\$14.5 billion** for CSSA Scheme. This represents a net increase of **7.3%** over the current year. In the coming year, we will provide assistance under various intensive and special employment assistance programmes to help the single parents, long term unemployed and low income CSSA recipients to retain self-reliance.

### Other Direct Welfare Services

We propose to spend **\$1.5 billion** on youth services. This represents a net increase of **6.5%** over the current year. We will continue to introduce new initiatives, and expand other welfare services to better address societal challenges.

To help youth-at-risk overcome their problems, we have earmarked additional funds next year to funding pledges already announced in the Policy Address. Our approach is to focus on the early identification of those most at risk, timely intervention and support and steering marginal youth back onto the right course.

We propose to spend **1.7 billion** on family and child welfare. This represents a net increase of **5.8 %** over the current year. New initiatives include additional day nursery places, children protection and family education.

We will continue to look after the physical and psychological well-being of other disadvantaged groups in society and assist them to be self-reliant. We propose to spend **\$2.6 billion** to discharge our responsibilities towards the disabled, an increase of **12.9%** over the current year. In 2001-02, **\$219 million** has been earmarked to implement a major package of initiatives on rehabilitation services. These include additional residential and employment services, community service support, and better support for the disabled athletes.

## **Poverty Alleviation**

As highlighted in the CE's Policy Address, the poverty alleviation measures are both long and short term, and both broad and targeted in nature. Starting from 2001-02 the Government will create an additional 15 000 jobs over the coming two years. We have made a good start in the creation of these jobs, and have brought forward the recruitment of 600 jobs in this financial year and expect to continue the recruitment in the next few months.

## **Women's Well-being**

We established the Women's Commission in January this year. The Commission is tasked to serve as a central body for the identification of all women's needs, to address all matters of concern to women, and it will develop a long-term vision and strategies for the development and advancement of women. Under the 2001-02 draft Estimates, recurrent public expenditure **\$23.7 million** is provided to facilitate the work of the Women's Commission.