

For information

Legislative Council Panel on Security

Progress of the Development of Paramedic Ambulance Service

Introduction

This paper informs Members of the progress of the development of paramedic ambulance service (PAS) in Hong Kong.

Background

2. At the Panel meeting on 6 February 2001, Members were briefed on the progress of the review on the further development of PAS in Hong Kong. Some Members expressed concerns about the proposed 4-year time frame to extend PAS to all ambulances and suggested that the period should be shortened as far as practicable. The Administration was requested to examine the feasibility of achieving the full extension of PAS to all ambulances within a shorter period and provide a progress report in March 2001.

Feasibility of Shortening the Implementation Period

3. To achieve the full provision of PAS, around 550 additional ambulance supervisors have to be trained and qualified as Emergency Medical Assistant II (EMA II). This requires conducting a total of 23 EMA II training courses with 24 ambulance personnel for each course. In examining the feasibility of shortening the implementation period, we have given consideration to the following factors –

- (a) the training and financial resources required including the number of qualified instructors, class size, training facilities, scope for further expansion and additional overtime allowance to enable the release of staff for paramedic training; and
- (b) the optimum number of ambulance supervisors who can be released from operational duties to attend the 10-week paramedic training course for qualification at the EMA II level and the 2-week refresher programme for re-certification (every three years for a qualified supervisor), without prejudice to the normal delivery of emergency ambulance services.

4. Our initial assessment is that it would take a minimum of three years to effect full provision of PAS on all ambulances, without prejudice to the efficiency and performance of emergency ambulance service.¹ Any further compression would cause adverse implications for the normal delivery of emergency ambulance service and the release of staff for training. We will consider how best we can shorten the implementation period in the light of the consultancy findings (see paragraph 6 following).

Interim Measures

5. For 2001-02, FSD will continue to qualify 52 ambulance supervisors at EMA II level within existing resources. It also has plans to extend PAS to 80 ambulances and 20 motorcycles in day shift and 40 ambulances in night shift by the end of 2001.

Way forward

6. As foreshadowed at the Panel meeting on 6 February 2001, FSD has appointed a consultancy firm 'Crow Maunsell Management Consultants Ltd' (CMMCL) to carry out a comprehensive study on the further development of PAS in Hong Kong, including examination of the full implications and resource requirements and development of a detailed implementation plan. CMMCL has commenced the study in mid March and aims to complete it by end June. They will submit an interim report by end April and a draft final report in late May. Subject to its findings and further examination, we will consider full provision of PAS and, if necessary, seek additional resources in the normal manner as soon as possible.

Security Bureau

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¹ If a three-year programme is to be pursued, FSD will each year need to undertake 8 paramedic training courses to qualify ambulance supervisors at EMA II level and also 9 refresher programmes to re-certify qualified EMA II supervisors. These graduates will be progressively added to strengthen the ambulance fleet to effect full provision of PAS at the end.