

## **LegCo Panel on Health Services**

### **Establishment of a Radiotherapy Centre and Redevelopment of the Accident and Emergency Department at Princess Margaret Hospital**

#### **Purpose**

This paper briefs Members on the establishment of a radiotherapy centre and the redevelopment of the Accident and Emergency (A&E) Department at the Princess Margaret Hospital (PMH).

#### **Background**

2. Cancer is the number one killer disease in Hong Kong, accounting for one-third of all deaths in 1999. The number of new cancer cases diagnosed rose from 19 344 in 1996 to 20 526 in 1999, and is projected to increase to 22 300 by 2006. Radiotherapy, normally programmed in conjunction with other treatment modalities like surgery or chemotherapy, offers one of the most effective curative treatments for cancer. And at least half of the cancer patients require radiotherapy treatment.

3. The Hospital Authority (HA) delivers its specialist tertiary oncology service on a territory-wide basis through operating five radiotherapy centres located at the Queen Mary Hospital, Pamela Youde Nethersole Eastern Hospital, Queen Elizabeth Hospital (QEH), Prince of Wales Hospital and Tuen Mun Hospital respectively. These five radiotherapy centres are equipped with a total of 22 linear accelerators which are operating at their optimal capacity. The increasing demand for oncology service has resulted in the territory-wide average waiting time for radiotherapy treatment being lengthened from 2.5 weeks to 3 weeks in the past eighteen months, and HA estimates that the waiting time will be further lengthened to 3.5 weeks by 2003 and by 2006, to 6.5 weeks. Cancer treatment is time critical. Provision of timely radiotherapy treatment would improve the outcome of cancer treatment and hence the chance of survival. In this connection, a two-week interval to plan and start curative radiotherapy treatment is considered reasonable by international standard. We therefore propose to establish

a sixth radiotherapy centre in Hong Kong to ensure that cancer patients can receive timely treatment for enhanced prospects of cure.

4. Having regard to the geographical distribution of the existing five radiotherapy centres as well as their respective coverage, HA proposes to set up a radiotherapy centre at PMH to enhance the accessibility of oncology service to the 1.2 million population in the New Territories South (NTS) cluster. At present, about two-thirds of the cancer patients in the NTS cluster are treated at QEH, while the rest have to receive treatment at the Tuen Mun Hospital, Prince of Wales Hospital or Queen Mary Hospital. NTS patients account for about a quarter of the patient load of the radiotherapy centre at QEH, and this is a key attributing factor for the long waiting time for treatment at the QEH Centre, currently at around four weeks on average and is the longest among all the existing radiotherapy centres. The establishment of a radiotherapy centre to serve the NTS cluster would also improve the waiting time for treatment at the QEH Centre.

5. The existing A&E Department of PMH has been in operation for almost thirty years and upgrading of its facilities to meet the prevailing standards of a modern A&E Department is long overdue. The Department also suffers from severe space shortage and has become extremely congested due to increased patient activities over the years. Annual A&E attendances rose by 15% from 130 100 in 1997 to 150 200 in 2001, and is expected to rise to 200 000 by 2010. There is a need to reprovise the A&E Department in new and expanded facilities to cope with service demand, and enhance its capacity as a trauma centre in the NTS cluster.

### **Scope of Project**

6. The three-storey A&E Block of PMH was constructed almost thirty years ago. It houses the A&E Department, the Computed Tomography Scan suite, the Magnetic Resonance Imaging suite, the mammography room, stores, as well as offices and workshops of the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department. Its central location within the PMH compound is an ideal site for both the proposed radiotherapy centre and the expanded A&E Department. HA proposes to redevelop the aged A&E Block for the combined development of the proposed radiotherapy centre and the expanded A&E Department as well as the reprovise of the remaining facilities of the existing A&E Block. The proposed radiotherapy centre will offer a comprehensive range of oncology services, including specialist out-patient (SOP) consultation, two in-patient wards with 68 beds, chemotherapy and

palliative care. The centre will handle around 40 000 SOP attendances annually, and be equipped with three linear accelerators for treatment of 1 050 cancer cases annually. The expanded A&E Department will have three trauma rooms, nine partitioned treatment cubicles for enhanced patient privacy, five consultation / examination rooms, one minor operating theatre, and designated offices for patient and bereavement counseling. Decanting of all the existing services in the A&E Block will be carefully arranged to ensure provision of services to the community will not be interrupted.

### **Public Consultation**

7. HA consulted the Kwai Tsing District Board on 30 April 2002 regarding the proposal. Members of the Board supported the project.

### **Way Forward**

8. We plan to seek the approval of the Finance Committee (FC) of the Legislative Council in July 2002 for funding of the project at an estimated cost of about \$580 million. Subject to FC's approval, the construction works will commence in the latter half of 2002 with a view to completion by 2005.

### **Advice Sought**

9. Members are requested to note the content of this paper.

Health and Welfare Bureau  
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