

For Information

Legislative Council Panel on Security Progress Report on the Further Development of Paramedic Ambulance Service

Introduction

This paper updates Members on the progress of the further development of paramedic ambulance service (PAS) in Hong Kong and provides information on the demand for as well as actual performance of the emergency ambulance service (EAS) in general in the last six months.

Background

2. At the Panel meeting held on 2 May 2002, Members were briefed on the progress of the Administration in taking forward the implementation plan to achieve full provision of PAS by April 2005 and further develop EAS in general. In planning for future resource allocation for EAS, the Administration would consider all relevant factors such as actual response time performance, the actual growth in the number of calls and the improvement to be achieved with the implementation of other management and organisational initiatives proposed by the consultant.

Progress in Development of PAS

3. Since April 2002, the training of EMA II* to meet the full provision of PAS has been progressing well and on schedule. The total number of ambulances providing paramedic care has increased from 91 to 114 in day shifts and from 45 to 58 at night, while paramedic Ambulance Motorcycles manned in day shifts has also increased from 15 to 26. Out of an establishment of 788 ambulance supervisors at the ranks of Principal/Senior Ambulanceman, 407 or 52% have been qualified as EMA II. We anticipate that by the first quarter of 2003, around 60% of ambulances in the fleet will be capable of providing paramedic care.

4. As regards other consultancy recommendations, we have made the following progress –

* According to the classification of the Justice Institute of British Columbia Paramedic Academy, Canada, EMA II is a medical personnel with medical skills and knowledge to provide advanced pre-hospital care at a pre-hospital setting. Paramedic training for EMA II includes intravenous infusion, defibrillation and use of selected drugs.

- (a) FSD will soon enter into negotiation with the Hospital Authority (HA) for the continuing provision of two half-time Medical Directors from April 2003 to March 2005 for the development and delivery of the EMA II programmes. A five-year strategic plan on training and education has been proposed by the Medical Directors for consideration by HA and FSD.
- (b) The alterations to the Fire Services Ambulance Command Training School (FSACTS) at Ma On Shan to provide more PAS training facilities will start early next year. Subject to availability of funds, the construction works of the permanent extension of the FSACTS will commence in the first quarter of 2003 and be completed in 2004 to accommodate all ambulance training programmes.
- (c) FSD will seek the approval of the Standing Committee on Disciplined Services Salaries and Conditions of Service on granting the special allowance to qualified Ambulancemen to ensure full provision of PAS.
- (d) FSD has completed the internal study to develop protocols for introducing structured call taking and pre-arrival instructions in the Fire Services Communication Centre. Its recommendations are being evaluated.
- (e) FSD has also completed the internal study to improve radio communication between ambulances and the Accident and Emergency Department of hospitals. FSD is considering the implementation of its recommendations in collaboration with HA.
- (f) The staggered shift arrangements in selected ambulance depots had been put on trial for three months from 2 July 2002 to 1 October 2002, following which a comprehensive evaluation was conducted. It was concluded that aforesaid arrangements had had positive contribution to the response time performance. Staff consultation on the detail of the implementation plan is underway.

Demand for and Actual Performance in EAS

5. For the period from June to November 2002, the number of emergency ambulance calls responded to by FSD was about 253,000 representing an increase of 3.2% when compared with the same period of 2001. The response time performance of EAS in this period was about 92.1%.

Way Forward

6. FSD will continue to take forward the implementation plan to ensure the full provision of PAS by April 2005. In the meantime, we will closely monitor the demand and performance of EAS to ensure optimisation of the use of available resources.

Security Bureau
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