

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL PANEL ON WELFARE SERVICES

**Effectiveness of Enhanced Home and Community Care Services
in Achieving Ageing in Place for Elders Living in the Community**

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Paper is to share with Members the effectiveness of Enhanced Home and Community Care Services (EHCCS) in achieving ageing in place for elders living in the community. The major findings on the “*Survey on the Effectiveness and User Satisfaction of the Enhanced Home and Community Care Services for the Elderly*” conducted in 2002 are highlighted in this Paper.

BACKGROUND

2. The Enhanced Home and Community Care Services for the Elderly (EHCCS) was introduced in April 2001 aiming to provide a whole range of tailor-made care and support services on a sustained basis to enable older persons who were confirmed by the standardized care need assessment to be of moderate or severe level of impairment to continue living at home. It also aims to provide support to caregivers in the care of their frail elders and to strengthen family cohesion. EHCCS provides a better option for elders who prefer to continue living with their families in a familiar living environment while appropriate services are being rendered to maintain their maximum level of functioning.

3. Through a bidding exercise, 18 service contracts were awarded to operators in 18 districts. The contracts last for a period of three years providing services to a total number of 1 453 users as pledged by the 18 operators. In view of the increasing demand, we have expanded the service from 1 453 to 2 189 in September 2002 through variations to contracts with provision of additional resources. As at 30 April 2003, 1 989 elders were receiving the service, i.e. 88.8% of the total expanded volume.

4. The Contract Management Section (CMS) of the Social Welfare Department (SWD) is responsible for overseeing and monitoring the performance of EHCCS to ensure that services delivered by the 18 operators are in compliance with the requirements set out in the service contracts. As part of the monitoring

mechanism, a user survey was commissioned in May 2002. The survey was conducted by a private sector agency, ACNielsen, to measure the satisfaction of users and family caregivers receiving EHCCS and the effectiveness of EHCCS in meeting its objectives.

5. To align with the enhanced home-based services, we have upgraded the home help teams through a major exercise of re-engineering community support services for elders launched in August 2002 so as to provide holistic care and support to elders under a continuum of care model. The updated progress of re-engineering which included the centre-based services as well has been reported to this Panel on 21 January 2003. Among the positive outcome from the exercise, 138 home help teams are upgraded to Integrated Home Care Services Teams (IHSCTs) from April 2003 to take over 3 130 cases from home care and meal contractors. On serving frail and disabled clients, these IHSCTs provide scope of services similar to that of EHCCS. The integrated mode will ensure that elders whose health conditions have deteriorated may continue to be served by the same team.

OBJECTIVES OF THE SURVEY

6. Regarding the survey on EHCCS, the aims were to:
- evaluate the extent to which the provision of EHCCS is effective in meeting the Government's initiative;
 - measure the extent to which the satisfaction of service users and family caregivers receiving the services; and
 - recommend ways for future improvement on EHCCS as a whole and on the services provided by individual operators.

METHODOLOGY

7. The study targeted at service users of EHCCS and their caregivers in 18 districts. As at 31 May 2002, there were 1 730 registered service users and 1 405 of them agreed to join in the survey. Appropriate sampling method was adopted to ensure the analysis to be statistically reliable. Subsequently, a total of 900 users were successfully interviewed. Among them, 132 were of severe impairment level and 768 were of moderate impairment level with a response rate of 86.3%. A total of 632 caregivers were successfully interviewed and the response rate was 88.5%.

8. Two different sets of questionnaire with a 5-point rating scale were used to collect the opinions of users and caregivers respectively. All users were given with a pre-interview assessment and Proxy Respondents were sought to represent

on behalf of those users being assessed as physically or mentally unfit for the interview. Among the total of 900 users, 341 users (38%) had to use Proxy Respondents where various measures had been taken by ACNielsen to ensure the reliability of answers given at the interviews.

MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE SURVEY

9. Key findings of the survey include the following:

(a) User/Caregiver Satisfaction towards EHCCS

- 91.5% of users and 91.6% of caregivers were in general satisfied with EHCCS.
- 88.3% of users and 88.1% of caregivers were satisfied with the suitability of service.
- 96.3% of users and 95.3% of caregivers were satisfied that they had been involved in the setting up and reviewing of their care plans.
- 90.8% of users and 91.7% of caregivers were satisfied that users' dignity and privacy were respected.
- 95.2% of users and 95.2% of caregivers were satisfied with staff attitude and work competency.
- 88.5% of users and 89.2% caregivers were content with the reliability of the service.
- 88.8% of users and 90.9% of caregivers felt satisfied about the flexibility of service.
- 84.5% of users and 88.1% of caregivers considered it easy to access the needed information and contact operators.

(b) Effectiveness of EHCCS

- 91% of users and 92% of caregivers agreed that EHCCS was in general effective in providing them with the needed care and support services.
- 77.2% of users and 79.3% of caregivers agreed that the service could enhance home safety.
- 68.7% of users and 72.6% of caregivers thought that the service was

able to reduce users' frequency of hospitalization.

- 78% of users and 78.6% of caregivers agreed that the service enabled them to acquire skills and knowledge of health caring.
- 68.3% of users and 68% of caregivers opined that the service helped to improve users' ability to take care of themselves.
- 88% of users and 85.9% of caregivers agreed that the service enabled users to stay in familiar environment continuously.
- 68.9% of users and 69.6% of caregivers were of the view that the service could lower the demand for residential care homes for the elderly.

10. The above findings are summarized in the **Annex** for easy reference.

OBSERVATIONS FROM THE SURVEY

11. As revealed by the survey, the majority of users and caregivers were satisfied with EHCCS delivered by the 18 operators. The result of survey also confirmed that EHCCS was effective in supporting users to live in their homes continuously. The aspect of "Staying in Familiar Environment" which was highly rated by users and caregivers respectively at 88% and 85.9% evidenced that EHCCS enabled the users to stay in the living environment of their own choice which is one of the key objectives of the services.

12. On the other hand, we observed that 68.9% and 69.6% of users and caregivers accounting for about two-thirds of the respondents agreed that the EHCCS could lower the demand for residential care homes for the elderly. This is an essential indicator showing that with the provision of appropriate care and support, elders prefer living with their family members to being sent to residential care homes. The latter alternative becomes the last resort when there are changes in the circumstances leading to requirement of higher level of care through an institutional setting.

13. Guided by the cornerstone principles of "ageing in place" and "continuum of care", EHCCS have achieved the mission of assisting the elders to age in place, i.e. they will stay as members of the community for as long as possible by means of family care and community support services, both formal and informal. We are pleased to note that the services are provided in a cost-effective, client-centred and integrated manner to meet the needs of frail elders and their family members. It further conveys a clear message that residential care services should be targeted towards those with genuine care needs and higher level of frailty.

CONCLUSION

14. The findings of the survey have re-affirmed that moving towards community care which achieves the dual purposes of meeting the elders' preference to age at home and their families' wish to take care of them is the right direction. With the re-engineering of community support services for elders in both centre-based and home-based services through gradual and smooth transition within 2003-04, we have further laid a solid infrastructure for supporting elders living in the community. Looking ahead, we plan to commission an evaluation study on the effectiveness of the re-engineered community support services to see how they help realize the concept of ageing in place and promote the well-being of the elders.

15. Since we allow gradual and smooth transition for service units to perform the enhanced functions and expect all upgraded teams and centres to meet the performance indicators and service statistics requirements set out in the Funding & Service Agreements by the last quarter in 2003-04, coupled with the fact that the outbreak of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) has affected the operation of the re-engineered services initially, we suggest that the evaluation be carried out in 2004.

ADVICE SOUGHT

16. Members are requested to note the findings of the survey.

**Social Welfare Department
June 2003**

User/Caregiver Satisfaction towards EHCCS

	Users				Caregivers			
	Mean score ¹	<u>Satisfied</u> %	<u>Average</u> %	<u>Dissatisfied</u> %	Mean score	<u>Satisfied</u> %	<u>Average</u> %	<u>Dissatisfied</u> %
Overall Satisfaction towards EHCCS	4.19	91.5	8.0	0.5	4.20	91.6	7.4	1.0
<i>Suitability of Service</i>	4.11	88.3	7.0	4.7	4.12	88.1	7.9	4.0
<i>User/ caregiver Involvement</i>	4.27	96.3	3.3	0.4	4.23	95.3	4.4	0.3
<i>Dignity & Privacy</i>	4.17	90.8	7.9	1.3	4.19	91.7	7.6	0.7
<i>Staff Attitude & Work Competency</i>	4.39	95.2	4.1	0.6	4.36	95.2	4.3	0.5
<i>Reliability of Service</i>	4.12	88.5	9.0	2.5	4.11	89.2	9.7	1.2
<i>Flexibility of Service</i>	4.08	88.8	9.9	1.4	4.07	90.9	7.7	1.5
<i>Information Accessibility</i>	4.02	84.5	14.2	1.3	4.09	88.1	10.6	1.3

User/Caregiver Effectiveness of EHCCS

	Users				Caregivers			
	Mean score	<u>Agree</u> %	<u>Average</u> %	<u>Disagree</u> %	Mean score	<u>Agree</u> %	<u>Average</u> %	<u>Disagree</u> %
Overall Effectiveness of EHCCS	4.20	91.0	7.5	1.4	4.21	92.0	7.6	0.5
<i>Improvement on Home Safety</i>	3.90	77.2	16.3	6.5	3.98	79.3	17.0	3.8
<i>Reducing Frequency of Hospitalization</i>	3.69	68.7	19.2	12.1	3.76	72.6	16.7	10.6
<i>Acquiring Skills/ knowledge of Health Caring</i>	3.90	78.0	14.0	8.0	3.92	78.6	15.3	6.1
<i>Improvement of Ability to Take Care of Oneself</i>	3.71	68.3	22.6	9.1	3.74	68.0	24.2	7.8
<i>Staying in Familiar Environment</i>	4.09	88.0	9.8	2.2	4.05	85.9	11.8	2.3
<i>Lower Demand for Residential Care Homes for the Elderly</i>	3.71	68.9	16.2	14.9	3.69	69.6	14.8	15.6

¹ Mean score represents the average rating score among all respondents based on a 5-point rating scale ranging from 1-5.