

Legislative Council Panel on Health Services

Development of Chinese Medicine Clinics in the Public Sector

PURPOSE

This paper seeks Members endorsement on the Administration's proposal to seek funding approval for establishing six additional Chinese medicine clinics (CMCs) in the public sector.

BACKGROUND

2. The Administration commenced introducing Chinese medicine service in the public sector since December 2003 by establishing CMCs. The objectives were to develop standards in Chinese medicine practice, to systematize the knowledge base of Chinese medicine through, amongst others, clinical research and to provide training in "evidence-based" Chinese medicine. Having regard to the existence of a private market which provides generally comprehensive and affordable Chinese medicine service to the community, we have committed to establishing around 18 clinics so that there will still be room for the private sector to continue its role in both service provision and training of new graduates.

3. As provision of Chinese medicine service in the public sector was new to the Hospital Authority (HA), to ensure the proper development and testing of the mode of operation and collaboration arrangements of the clinics, a phased development approach of the clinics has been adopted. The first phase included three clinics attached to the Tung Wah Hospital, the Yan Chai Hospital and the Alice Ho Miu Ling Nethersole Hospital. The services in the three clinics have been provided on a tripartite model in which the HA collaborates with a non-governmental organization (NGO) and a university in each of the

clinics. Patients are being charged a fee of \$120 per attendance which includes consultation and two doses of medicine. 20% of the quota of the clinics were allocated to recipients of Comprehensive Social Security Allowance and their fees and charges were waived.

NEW SITES FOR CMCs

4. We conducted a review of the services of the three clinics after a year of operation and reported to the Panel at its meeting on 13 June 2005 about the achievements of the clinics, the service delivery and operational models, and the development plan for the remaining clinics. The Panel was informed that the next phase would probably involve clinics in Wan Chai and Yuen Long as sites are readily available. Furthermore, a suitable site for a CMC was being identified in West Kowloon. Over the past few months, we have tried our best to look for more sites for inclusion in the second phase. We have now been able to identify four additional sites in Tseung Kwan O of Sai Kung, Kwun Tong, Kwai Tsing and Tuen Mun. However, there have been difficulties in identifying a suitable site in West Kowloon. Once we are able to identify a site, we will proceed with the necessary planning work. The following are the location of the six new clinic sites -

District	Location of CMCs
(i) Wan Chai	Tang Shiu Kin Hospital Community Ambulatory Care Centre
(ii) Sai Kung	Tseung Kwan O Hospital
(iii) Yuen Long	Yuen Long Madam Yung Fung Shee Health Centre
(iv) Kwai Tsing	Ha Kwai Chung Polyclinic and Special Education Services Centre
(v) Tuen Mun	Yan Oi Polyclinic
(vi) Kwun Tong	Ngau Tau Kok Jockey Club Clinic

5. Each clinic will comprise consultation rooms, treatment rooms, pharmacy, multi-activity room and other supporting facilities. As the clinics are to be set up in existing premises, the size of each clinic depends much on the area that is available. The size of the existing three clinics ranges from 270 m² to 386 m². From operating experience, the sites are found to be too small and the concerned NGOs which are operating other facilities in the same premises have utilised other available space in the same premises to provide CM services for the clinics. To allow sufficient development space for the provision of a fuller range of CM services, our latest search tries to focus on larger sites where possible. The size of the six new clinic sites ranges from 416 m² to 700 m².

6. The first three sites are currently vacant and works could commence as soon as funding approval has been obtained. As for the latter three sites, arrangements are being made for the existing users to vacate the premises and works are expected to start after the first quarter of 2006. There will be a total of nine CMCs after the establishment of the six new clinics, representing 50% of our target of setting up 18 clinics. We shall continue to search for suitable sites for setting up the remaining nine CMCs and will seek the Panel's advice as soon as further development plans are available.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

7. The estimated cost for renovating the sites and the provision of required furniture and equipment for the six clinics is \$35.1 million. We intend to seek funding support from the Public Works Subcommittee and the Finance Committee as soon as possible. Apart from the capital cost, an estimated expenditure of \$6 million will be required for the provision of a common electronic clinical management system in each of the clinic for sharing and collating information to facilitate overall management, audit and provision of "evidence-based" Chinese medicine. We shall seek funding approval from the Secretary for Financial Services and Treasury under delegated authority separately.

ADVICE SOUGHT

8. Members are requested to endorse the proposal of setting up six CMCs at the sites stated in paragraph 4 above.

Health, Welfare and Food Bureau
Hospital Authority
November 2005