

**For information on
21 March 2006**

**Legislative Council Panel on Manpower
Labour Department's
New Occupational Health Clinic in Fanling**

PURPOSE

This paper briefs Members on the Labour Department (LD)'s plan to set up a new occupational health clinic in Fanling to enhance its occupational health service in the New Territories.

BACKGROUND

2. In November 1993, LD set up its first occupational health clinic the Kwun Tong Occupational Health Clinic (KTOHC) with a view to enhancing the health of the working population through prevention, diagnosis and treatment of occupational and work-related diseases. The clinic provides clinical consultation and occupational health counselling service for workers. Workplace inspections are conducted when necessary to assess health hazards at work, and recommendations on preventive measures are given to employers to safeguard the health of workers.

3. Over the years, the demand for such clinical services has been increasing as evidenced by the growing number of clinical consultations, which has risen nearly ten fold from 895 in 1994 to 9,395 in 2005.

PROFILE OF CLINIC PATIENTS

4. Among the 16,000-odd patients seen in KTOHC in 2000 to 2005, 37% were male and 63% female. About 67% of them were aged between 31 to 50. Some 76% of the patients were diagnosed to be suffering from work-aggravated, work-related or occupational diseases, 7% from accidental injuries at work, and 17% had illnesses or injuries unrelated to work.

5. Most of the patients with work-aggravated, work-related or occupational diseases were clerical-related (32%), service (27%) or production-related (20%) personnel. The single most common health problem was musculoskeletal disorders, accounting for 89% of all the cases, and the rest mainly included skin diseases, respiratory diseases and hearing disorders. As far as musculoskeletal disorders are concerned, upper limb and neck were the involved parts in about 70% of all the cases, while lower back and lower limb accounted for most of the rest.

NEED FOR A NEW OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH CLINIC

6. Having regard to the world trend of increasing prevalence of work-related musculoskeletal disorders in developed countries, it is anticipated that the local demand for consultations for such diseases will continue to grow. In recent years, the awareness of the working population of occupational and work-related diseases has increased significantly. As they tend to seek diagnosis and treatment of these diseases more readily, a further increase in the demand for clinical services is expected.

7. The location of KTOHC is more convenient for patients from Hong Kong Island and Kowloon. Moreover, the clinical services currently provided by KTOHC have more or less been saturated. Against this background, we see the need to set up a new occupational health clinic in the New Territories and we have chosen North district as the location.

THE NEW OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH CLINIC

8. We plan to set up the new occupational health clinic on the seventh floor of the Fanling Health Centre at Pik Fung Road, Fanling. The new clinic occupies a floor area of 620 square metres. Apart from consultation rooms, there are also rooms for conducting health screening, clinical investigations and health counselling, as well as areas for conducting health education activities. Dispensary service will be provided by the Hospital Authority, and X-ray and laboratory services by the Department of Health.

9. As with clinical consultations currently provided at KTOHC, those at the new clinic will be provided by LD's team of occupational health officers in the clinical stream through internal redeployment. The new clinic is expected to enhance LD's existing clinical service by providing an additional 4,800 consultations a year.

10. The total cost of setting up the new clinic is estimated to be \$3.1 million, including \$2.1 million borne by the Architectural Services Department for carrying out fitting-out works and \$1 million by LD itself for purchasing medical and other equipment. The annual recurrent cost is estimated to be \$0.5 million. The new clinic will commence operation in the second half of 2006.

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