



醫院管理局

群策群力為病人·優質護理滿香林

HOSPITAL
AUTHORITY

Quality Patient-Centred Care Through Teamwork

Our Ref: (92) in FP2/FC/HAHO/
Yr Ref: CB(3)/PAC/R47

30 December 2006

Clerk
Public Accounts Committee
Legislative Council Building
8 Jackson Road
Central, Hong Kong

(Attn: Ms Dora Wai)

Dear Ms Wai,

The Director of Audit's Report
on the results of value for money audits (Report No. 47)

Chapter 5 – Hospital Authority: management of outstanding medical fees

With reference to your letter of 21 December 2006, we would like to inform the Committee that the proposed measures to enhance fee collection were presented to the HA Board for consideration at its meeting on 21 December 2006. Members' endorsement has been obtained as follows:

- a) Defer submission of birth data to Birth Registry for Non-eligible Persons (NEPs) until outstanding fees are paid

HA will defer the submission of birth data to the Birth Registry for NEPs until settlement of outstanding fees up to 42 days in accordance with the legal requirement under the Births & Deaths Registration Ordinance. This measure will be implemented sometime in 1Q 2007.

- b) Eligible (EPs) and NEPs with outstanding bills will only be provided with emergency services

Eligible (EPs) and NEPs with outstanding bills will only be treated for emergency situations. All other treatments will not be provided. The enforcement of this policy would serve as deterrence to patients for defaulting on payment of their medical bills. This measure will be implemented by the end of 1Q 2007.

c) Introduce administrative charge for late payments

HA will introduce an administrative charge for late payments in line with the practice of other government departments. The initial charge of 5% will be imposed on bills overdue for 2 months after the issuance of final bill and 10% thereafter if outstanding for a longer period of time. This measure will be applicable to all patients and would encourage early settlement of bills. Subject to clearance on legal implications and direction from HWFB, the administrative charge will be implemented sometime in 2Q 2007.

d) Tender for reputable international debt collection agency to pursue high risk NEP debts

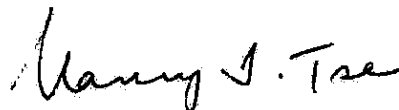
HA executives proposed to engage reputable professional firms to provide debt collection service for high risk NEP debts. A number of members expressed their reservations on the effectiveness of this measure and the implication on HA's reputation. After deliberation, it was agreed that the executives should explore the cost-effectiveness of engaging reputable international debt collection agency to pursue high-risk NEP bad debts and report back to the Board for further consideration. It is planned that the result of the assessment will be reported back to the HA Board by the end of 3Q 2007.

e) Deposit payment for EPs

Members decided that the idea of collecting deposit from EPs for hospital stay would be considered at a later stage, depending on the effectiveness of other measures.

Furthermore, regarding the measure on utilizing Accident and Emergency Departments to collect an extended range of fees and deposits, it was agreed at the internal operations meeting that 24 hours payment facilities will be provided at all Accident and Emergency Departments to patients in 1Q 2007.

Yours sincerely,



(Nancy Tse)
for Chief Executive
Hospital Authority

c.c. Secretary for Health, Welfare and Food (Attn: Mr. Patrick Nip)
Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury (Attn: Miss Amy Tse)
Director of Audit (Attn: Mr Andrew Chiang)