

Our ref: FH/H/1/5 Pt 93

Your ref:

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13 June 2008

Ms Mary So
Clerk to Panel
Panel on Health Services
Legislative Council
8 Jackson Road
Central

Dear Ms So,

**Review of the Obstetric Package Charge
for Non-eligible Persons**

I refer to item 5 of the list of follow-up actions in LC Paper No. CB(2)1937/07-08(02). At the Panel meeting on 18 February 2008, the Administration was requested to –

- (a) provide information in writing on the numbers of births delivered in public hospitals by Mainland women whose spouses were Hong Kong residents before and after the implementation of the new obstetric service arrangements;
- (b) consider members' view that refund should be made in the case of premature birth in the Mainland due to medical reasons; and
- (c) to take into account the views of members and deputations expressed at the meeting in the coming review on the whole package of obstetric service arrangements and revert to members on the outcome of the review before the expiry of the current legislative session.

Response to (a)

The number of live births in public hospitals by non-eligible persons (NEPs) whose spouses were Hong Kong permanent residents before and after the implementation of the new obstetric service arrangements are set out in the Annex. However, the figures are only a crude estimate as the NEPs are not obliged to provide information on their spouses to the Hospital Authority (HA). For those NEPs who were unwilling to do so, it may not imply that their spouses must be non-Hong Kong residents.

Response to (b) and (c)

HA noted the views expressed by Members and the depositions at the Panel meeting on 18 February 2008. HA's review on the effectiveness of the new obstetric service arrangements indicated that the new arrangements have the effect of ensuring that local pregnant women would be given priority in receiving services in public hospital and deterring the non-local pregnant women to seek emergency hospital admissions through Accident & Emergency Departments (A&EDs) shortly before labour. The number of live births by non-local women giving births in public hospitals has decreased by 26.4% from 11,971 for the period from February 2006 to January 2007 to 8,810 for the period from February 2007 to January 2008, while the number of live births by non-local women in public hospital admitted through A&EDs has reduced by 86.8% in the 12 months after February 2007.

Given there is an ongoing judicial review concerning obstetric services provided by public hospitals, HA will conduct further review on the charges of obstetric services and arrangement of refund after the judicial review is concluded.

Yours sincerely,

(Kirk YIP)
for Secretary for Food and Health

Encl

Annex

**Number of live births in public hospitals by non-eligible persons
whose spouses were permanent Hong Kong residents**

	Number of live births in public hospitals by non-eligible persons whose spouses were permanent Hong Kong residents ^{Remark}
Before the implementation of the new obstetric service arrangements (From February to December 2006)	4 773
After the implementation of the new obstetric service arrangements (From February to December 2007)	3 442

Remark

The figures are only a crude estimate as the non-eligible persons are not obliged to provide information on their spouses to the Hospital Authority.