

Review on the efficiency and effectiveness of the urgent care ambulance service

We have examined the efficiency and effectiveness of our urgent care ambulance service. As there are a few issues to be further considered, we aim to conclude the matter in around May/June 2009. Pending the outcome of the review, we are in parallel working closely with the Hospital Authority to enhance the efficiency of the service, including improving the communication between the ambulance crews and HA staff with a view to shortening the waiting time of ambulances for picking up or handing over patients at hospitals. We are also exploring other means to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of the service.

Review on the reasons for not meeting the baseline daily ambulance availability (DAA) on night shift in 2007

The reasons are that –

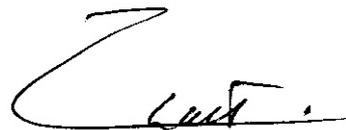
- (a) the rate of staff absence due to sickness was higher on night shift than on day shift as there is a smaller pool of staff on night shift;
- (b) the Urgent Care Fleet (UCF) and Emergency Medical Assistant Motorcycle (EMAMC) that are available on day shift only cannot be deployed to augment the inadequacy of staff due to sickness during night shift; and
- (c) the manpower on day shift comprising two watches of ambulance personnel doubles that on night shift comprising one watch only. The smaller pool of staff on night shift is less capable of covering unexpected staff absences due to sickness.

Having regard to the above reasons, we will continue to monitor and review the situation so as to improve further the overall availability.

Speeding up the procurement process for ambulances

The measures described in para (b)(ii) of my letter to you dated 18 March 2009 will be adopted in the coming Capital Non-Works Resource Allocation Exercise for 2009.

Yours sincerely,



(LO Chun-hung)
Director of Fire Services

c.c. Secretary for Security (Attn : Ms. Carol YUEN)
Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury (Attn : Ms. Bernadette LINN)
Director of Electrical and Mechanical Services (Attn : Mr. SHE Siu-kuen)
Director of Audit (Attn : Ms. Hildy CHAN)
Director of Government Logistics

Internal

Chief Ambulance Officer