



聖保祿醫院
St. Paul's Hospital

(incorporated in Hong Kong and limited by guarantee)

2 Eastern Hospital Road, Causeway Bay, Hong Kong.
Tel: 28906008 Fax: 25764558

Our ref: SPH09-GC-DF/hl/0010

Hon. Dr. Joseph LEE Kok Long,
Chairman of the LegCo's Panel on Health Services
Legislative Council Secretariat,
Legislative Council Building,
8 Jackson Road,
Central, H.K.

BY FAX (2537 1851) and BY POST

03 March 2009

Dear Dr. Lee,

Re: Support of the development of a territory-wide patient-oriented electronic health record system

This letter is submitted in support of the development of a territory-wide electronic health record (eHR) system under the co-ordination of the Food and Health Bureau for documentation, storage and sharing of patients' medical information between healthcare providers by a highly secured electronic platform. We firmly believe that a government-led development will generate confidence among private healthcare providers and patients.

We are pleased to see the Government's continuous efforts in driving the development of an efficient electronic clinical information management system (CMS). Nevertheless, we would like to see the Government take a more active role in transferring to us the know-how and expertise that would facilitate our deployment of CMS. We would also like to see the Government providing technical support for us to connect the CMS to our hospitals' electronic patient record systems, and to provide the necessary interface to facilitate the interconnection with the future eHR system.

Additionally, we applaud the efforts already invested in the Public Private Interface-electronic Patient Record (PPI-ePR) Sharing Pilot Projects with a view to enhancing collaboration between the public and private sectors. These pilot projects help facilitate a free flow of patients between the two sectors and allow timely access of information. The Government should conduct more similar sharing pilot projects to test the technical feasibility of eHR sharing, especially with regard to protection of patient data privacy under an internet environment.

The availability of comprehensive e-records will enable timely and informed decisions to be made at the point of care. Additionally, online access to

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drugs dispensed will lead to reduction in duplication and prevention of complications. Repetitive and often expensive investigations can be avoided. Various healthcare providers will no longer need to repeat data collection, as histories are readily available on eHR, and error in hand written transcribing is minimized.

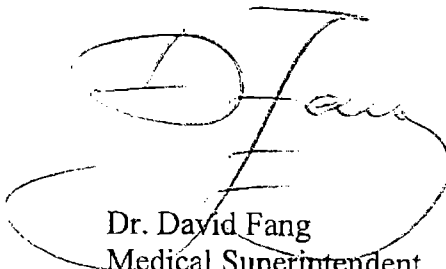
The changes brought about by eHR will also provide the opportunity for extensive re-engineering of health care administrative processes to achieve greater efficiency, and yield associated cost savings. Examples are enhanced capabilities in medical record management, medical analysis and planning, monitoring of healthcare outcomes and detection of epidemiological changes in disease patterns. Integration with other industries in the healthcare eco-system, such as insurance companies, pharmacists, social welfare agencies would also greatly benefit all parties involved, particularly the patients.

With the development of an integrated eHR system, adequate data protection will require appropriate laws, regulations and standards to be established.

The private hospital sector is keen to upgrade its services for the residents of Hong Kong, which increasingly depends on our IT infrastructure. Furthermore, we strongly believe that an up-to-date eHR system will enhance Hong Kong's position as a medical hub in Asia.

Based on the above, we fervently hope that the Legislative Council Health Panel will support the proposal to develop a territory wide patient centred electronic health record system.

Yours Sincerely,



Dr. David Fang
Medical Superintendent