



中華人民共和國香港特別行政區政府總部食物及衛生局  
Food and Health Bureau, Government Secretariat  
The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region  
The People's Republic of China

**Our Ref.:** ( ) in FHB/H/18/5/11

**Tel:** 2973 8117

**Fax:** 2840 0467

24 May 2010

Ms Mary SO  
Clerk to Panel on Health Services  
Legislative Council  
Legislative Council Building  
8 Jackson Road, Central

Dear Ms SO,

**Legislative Council Panel on Health Services  
Enhancing Primary Care – Establishment of Primary Care Office**

At the meeting of the LegCo Panel on Health Services on 12 April 2010, Members requested the Administration to provide the following with respect to the proposal to establish a Primary Care Office (PCO) under the Department of Health –

- (a) information on details and work plans of each major function of the proposed PCO as well as the major duties and responsibilities of the staff of PCO in providing professional and technical support for the various projects to enhance primary care; and
- (b) more detailed information on how the establishment of PCO would benefit the patients in the paper for submission to the Establishment Subcommittee (ESC).

Work plans and job duties

The proposed PCO will perform the following major functions on an on-going basis, subject to the strategic directions given by the Working Group on Primary Care chaired by the Secretary for Food and Health with representatives from healthcare professionals in both the public and private sectors, patients groups, academics and other stakeholders –

- (i) to co-ordinate the development of primary care in Hong Kong;
- (ii) to develop and promote primary care conceptual models and clinical protocols for managing individual diseases and appropriate for specific age groups;
- (iii) to develop preventive and health promoting protocols based on the needs and health risks of people of different age groups;
- (iv) to establish and maintain the Primary Care Directory to promote the “family doctor” concept and foster multi-disciplinary collaboration;
- (v) to explore, plan and implement different primary care service delivery models, including the provision of comprehensive primary care services in local communities by setting up community health centres or networks through collaboration with the public and private healthcare sectors and/or NGOs;
- (vi) to co-ordinate and monitor the progress of various pilot projects to enhance primary care, work with independent assessment bodies to continuously evaluate the projects and the effectiveness of the primary care conceptual models and service delivery models during the pilot period, and formulate plans for further development of primary care services;
- (vii) to conduct research on primary care in different areas, including, for example, assessing the healthcare needs of different population groups and identifying service gaps, reviewing local and international evidence on effective and efficient strategies to fill the service gaps, and exploring and evaluating strategies for the promotion of self-management, patient empowerment and patient-centred care in the primary care settings;
- (viii) to plan and provide primary care-based training for healthcare professionals of various disciplines and to further develop the basic competencies in the delivery of health services, such as patient-centred care, partnering with patients and other healthcare providers, quality improvement, information and communication technology, and public health perspectives;
- (ix) to plan and oversee the work of public education for continuous promotion of primary care; and
- (x) to manage and allocate resources to support various pilot projects and initiatives to enhance primary care.

The staff of PCO will be divided into three groups based on their duties, namely (a) policy and strategy development; (b) professional and technical support; and (c) administration support. The duties of the three groups of staff are set out at *Annex*.

Benefits to patients

The proposed PCO will support the Food and Health Bureau and the Working Group on Primary Care in the strategic planning, implementation and overall co-ordination of the long-term development of primary care in Hong Kong, thereby allowing the public to receive better primary care services. Primary care is the first point of contact for individuals and families in a continuous healthcare process. A good primary care system provides the public with access to comprehensive and holistic care, with an emphasis on disease prevention and betterment of health. International experiences show that healthcare systems with strong primary care infrastructures have healthier populations, fewer health-related disparities and lower overall costs for health care. Studies reveal that people who have regular primary care doctors providing comprehensive care have better health outcomes. There is also evidence which highlights the role of an effective primary care system in supporting modification of unhealthy behaviours, identification of high-risk groups, provision of early interventions and better management of chronic health problems.

Detailed information on the importance of primary care and deliberations on reforming the primary care system and enhancing primary care services in Hong Kong have been included in paragraphs 3 and 4 as well as Enclosure 1 of the paper for submission to ESC.

Yours sincerely,



(Bruno LUK)  
for Secretary for Food and Health

### **Proposed Duties of Staff of the Primary Care Office by Groups**

The staff of the proposed Primary Care Office (PCO) will be divided into three groups based on their duties, namely (a) policy and strategy development; (b) professional and technical support; and (c) administration support.

(a) Duties of staff responsible for policy and strategy development (including Assistant Director of Health, Principal Medical and Health Officer, Consultant, Senior Medical and Health Officers and Administrative Officer)

- to support Food and Health Bureau in providing strategic direction for the development of primary care services, and to support the formulation of policies by evaluating the public's needs for primary care services and the effectiveness of primary care reforms in other places, as well as collecting the views from public and private healthcare sectors and other relevant stakeholders;
- to allocate resources for various pilot projects and initiatives to enhance primary care;
- to assist in overseeing the implementation of the primary care reform and related initiatives; and
- to explore international evidence on primary care strategies and implement research projects.

(b) Duties of staff responsible for professional and technical support (divided into three groups comprising Senior Medical and Health Officers, Medical and Health Officers, Nursing Officers and Scientific Officers (Medical))

(i) *Clinical protocols and promotional strategies*

- to co-ordinate the development of primary care conceptual models and clinical protocols for managing individual diseases and appropriate for specific age groups as well as to assist in setting primary care service standards;
- to develop overall strategies for promoting primary care and various initiatives to enhance primary care;

to formulate and implement strategies for promoting primary care clinical protocols to the public and healthcare professionals as well as to evaluate the effectiveness of the strategies;

- to oversee and implement research projects to identify the public's needs for primary care services so as to map out the future development direction of primary care; and
- to support the work of and provide secretariat services to the Task Force on Conceptual Model and Preventive Protocols under Working Group on Primary Care (WGPC).

(ii) *Primary Care Directory, primary care workforce and community health centres*

- to co-ordinate the establishment of the Primary Care Directory in phases and promote healthcare professionals' entry into the Directory and the public's utilisation of the Directory through collaboration with the public and private healthcare sectors, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and other stakeholders;
- to assist in arranging primary care-related training for healthcare professionals of various disciplines;
- to design, implement and evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of various primary care service delivery models in collaboration with the public and private healthcare sectors, NGOs and other stakeholders, including the planning of community health centres or networks according to the public's needs for primary care services in the community; and
- to support the work of and provide secretariat services to the Task Force on Primary Care Directory under WGPC.

(iii) *Primary care service models, pilot projects and evaluation*

- to assist in planning, overseeing and co-ordinating the implementation of various primary care service delivery models and the development of associated clinical services;
- to assist in planning, co-ordinating and implementing primary care pilot projects involving public-private partnership;
- to provide clinical and professional support for the development

of primary care conceptual models and clinical protocols;

- to oversee and co-ordinate the implementation of research projects for evaluating the effectiveness and efficiency of various primary care service delivery models (including service delivery models that involve public-private partnership), and to generate relevant information for mapping out the future development direction of primary care; and
- to support the work of and provide secretariat services to the Task Force on Primary Care Delivery Models under WGPC.

(c) Duties of staff responsible for administration support (including Senior Executive Officers, Executive Officer I, Executive Officer II, Clerical Officer, Assistant Clerical Officers and Personal Secretary I)

- to assist in managing and allocating resources to support various pilot projects and initiatives to enhance primary care, and to formulate the administrative arrangements of funding for training programmes related to primary care;
- to undertake the administrative work required for establishing and maintaining the Primary Care Directory;
- to explore and implement projects on different primary care service delivery models, including the administrative work required for setting up community health centres or networks;
- to undertake the administrative work required for implementing research projects related to primary care;
- to provide administrative and clerical support for meetings held by PCO with different stakeholders; and
- to support the daily operation of PCO.