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Panel on Welfare Services

Background brief prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat for the meeting on 9 November 2009

Integrated Discharge Support Trial Programme for Elderly Patients

Purpose

This paper provides background information on the launch of the Integrated Discharge Support Trial Programme for Elderly Patients (the Programme).

Background

2. According to the Administration, "ageing in the community" is an underlying principle of the Government's elderly policy. This is in line with most elders' wish as they cherish the support from their families and the sense of belonging that a familiar community offers. It is also internationally recognized that "ageing in the community" can enhance elders' quality of life and that elders with long-term care (LTC) needs do not necessarily have to be cared for in residential care homes for the elderly.

3. To facilitate elders to age in the community, the Government has introduced various services to meet the multifarious needs of elders and enhance the support for carers. Relevant initiatives include –

- (a) provision of centre-based day care services to elders who have LTC needs and cannot be taken care of by family members during daytime;
- (b) introduction of Enhanced Home and Community Care Services to provide a tailor-made individualized package of home-based services to meet the needs of frail elders;

- (c) upgrading of all Multi-service Centres for the Elderly and 110 Social Centres for the Elderly to District Elderly Community Centres and Neighbourhood Elderly Centres to enhance their roles and functions in providing elderly services in an integrated approach; and
- (d) strengthening of support to carers by offering them information, training and counselling services, helping them with the formation of mutual-assistance groups, setting up resource corners, and giving demonstration and loan of rehabilitation equipment through the elderly centres.

4. In the 2007-2008 Budget, the Administration announced that \$96 million would be allocated to implement in the next four years a trial scheme in two districts to provide one-stop support services to elderly discharged from hospitals who had difficulty in taking care of themselves.

Launching of the Programme

5. When the Panel on Welfare Services (the Panel) was briefed on the welfare initiatives in the Chief Executive's Policy Address 2008-2009 and Policy Agenda at the meeting on 23 October 2008, members were advised that the Programme aimed at enhancing the support to elderly hospital discharges and their carers with a view to enhancing the quality of life of the elders and facilitating their stay in the community. With the \$96 million earmarked in the 2007-2008 Budget, the first two pilot programmes were launched in March and August 2008 in Kwun Tong and Kwai Tsing respectively. The third pilot programme would be launched in Tuen Mun in the third quarter of 2009.

6. In its response to the motion on "Formulating a comprehensive elderly policy" carried at the Council meeting on 14 January 2009, the Administration advised, among other things, that the third pilot programme was scheduled to be launched in Tuen Mun in July 2009.

7. At its meeting on 22 October 2009, the Panel was advised that three pilot projects under the Programme, covering Kwun Tong, Kwai Tsing and Tuen Mun were launched in March 2008, August 2008 and July 2009 respectively. Integrated support services were provided to both elderly hospital discharges who had difficulty in taking care of themselves and their carers. Such support services included discharge planning, transitional rehabilitation services, transitional home-based community care services and carers' training and support. The entire Programme would serve a total of 20 000 elders and 7 000 elder carers.

8. In the course of studying the community care and support services for the elderly, the Subcommittee on Elderly Services appointed under the Panel on Welfare Services in the Third Legislative Council conducted a visit on 10 June 2008 to observe the implementation of the pilot programme in Kwun Tong. Members were briefed on the scope of support services provided to the elderly before and after being discharged from hospitals, which included daily living skill training, community living skill training, carer education and training, and home assessment and medication, assistive device consultation and training.

Latest development

9. The Administration will brief the Panel on 9 November 2009 on the implementation of the Programme.

Relevant papers

10. Members may wish to refer to the Administration's papers for the meetings of the Panel on 23 October 2008 and 22 October 2009. The papers are available on the Council's website at <http://www.legco.gov.hk>.

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