

**LEGCO QUESTION NO. 6**  
**(Oral Reply)**

**Asked by: Hon WONG Kwok-hing      Date of meeting: 23 June 2010**

**Replied by: Secretary for Labour  
and Welfare**

**Question:**

With growing concern of society about the integration of people recovering from mental illness into the community, the Government set up in March 2009 in Tin Shui Wai the first Integrated Community Centre for Mental Wellness (“ICCMW”) in Hong Kong. Besides, the Government has announced the provision of an additional recurrent funding of about \$70 million in the current financial year to extend the service mode of integrated mental wellness to the 18 districts in Hong Kong, and to increase manpower to enhance community support services. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (a) of the total number of cases received by ICCMW to date, the types of such cases, and the respective average time taken to follow up the various types of cases; and whether it has assessed if ICCMW can achieve the intended objectives and service effectiveness so far;
- (b) of the situation of staff departure of ICCMW since its establishment; the current number of employees employed by ICCMW and its manpower ratio; whether the authorities will employ more manpower to alleviate the work pressure of employees; and
- (c) how the aforesaid recurrent funding of about \$70 million has been allocated to the various districts, and whether it has assessed if the recurrent funding is sufficient to meet the increasing needs of patients; whether more support will be provided to Kwai Tsing, Kwun Tong and Yuen Long districts in which a larger number of people with serious mental illness reside; if so, when the additional resources will be allocated to the aforesaid districts, and of the amount of resources to be spent directly on enhancing frontline manpower?

**Reply:**

President,

The Government is mindful of the welfare needs of ex-mentally ill persons and their family members and keeps under review the operation of and demand for rehabilitation services in the community to ensure that the services would keep pace with the changing circumstances. Meanwhile, the Hospital Authority (HA), the Social Welfare Department (SWD) and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have been working closely to provide effective rehabilitation services for mentally ill persons.

At present, ex-mentally ill persons have to receive various Community Mental Health Support Services (CMHSS) at different rehabilitation agencies and service units run by NGOs. We set up an Integrated Community Centre for Mental Wellness (ICCMW) (the Wellness Centre) in Tin Shui Wai in March 2009 to provide one-stop service through an integrated service delivery mode on a trial basis. With reference to the operational experience of the Wellness Centre, we are revamping the CMHSS provided by SWD (including Community Mental Health Intervention Project, Community Mental Health Link, Community Mental Health Care Services, services provided by the Training and Activity Centres for Ex-mentally Ill Persons, etc) with a view to expanding the service mode of ICCMW to all the 18 districts in the territory in 2010-11. We will also strengthen the manpower of these centres to provide comprehensive and accessible services to more persons in need, as well as to dovetail with the Case Management Programme implemented by HA which aims to provide appropriate support to persons with severe mental illness in the community. An additional funding allocation of about \$70 million has been provided to SWD by the Government in this financial year for implementation of the above initiative. My reply to the various parts of Hon. WONG Kwok-hing's question is as follows:

- (a) The Wellness Centre has been in operation since March 2009. Up to the end of May 2010, it has served a total of 418 cases, of which the service targets of 262 cases are ex-mentally ill persons while the remaining cases are persons with suspected mental health problems. On the whole, the average follow-up time for these cases was 7.7 months. However, it should be noted that as the circumstances of individual cases and the needs of individual service users vary, the progress of the cases and required time for follow-up are different.

Regarding service effectiveness, the New Life Psychiatric Rehabilitation Association (i.e. the operator of the Wellness Centre) and the Department of Psychology, Chinese University of Hong Kong have conducted a comprehensive study to evaluate the effectiveness of services provided by the Wellness Centre in the first year of operation. The findings indicated that the provision of one-stop service could effectively facilitate services users to obtain the services required within a shorter period of time. Meanwhile, the one-stop service mode could enable the Wellness Centre to flexibly adopt the triage system in case management, thereby facilitating early identification of potential risks of individual cases and the provision of appropriate services. The above study findings confirm that the setting up of ICCMWs can fulfil our intended service objectives.

- (b) SWD provides funding under the Lump Sum Grant (LSG) subvention mode to NGOs to operate ICCMW services. Under the LSG subvention system, NGOs have the flexibility to deploy the subventions to arrange suitable staffing and handle staffing issues to ensure service quality and meet service needs. Besides, upon revamping the CMHSS, SWD will provide additional resources to the ICCMWs (including the Wellness Centre) to enable them to strengthen their manpower to provide more comprehensive community support services. The Wellness Centre currently employs a total of 14 staff members, including social workers, occupational therapists and other supporting staff. There has not been any staff turnover since the Wellness Centre's commencement of service.
- (c) The SWD will consolidate existing resources of CMHSS, i.e. an annual funding allocation of about \$65 million, together with an additional annual provision of about \$70 million, i.e. a total of \$135 million, to revamp the CMHSS and set up ICCMWs in all the 18 districts in the territory. SWD expects that these ICCMWs will commence services in October 2010.

Taking into account the differences in size and expected number of service users of ICCMWs in different districts, the amount of recurrent subvention allocated to individual districts will vary correspondingly. To tie in with the Case Management Programme implemented by HA in Kwai Tsing, Kwun Tong and Yuen Long districts on a pilot basis in 2010-11, SWD will provide additional resources to the ICCMWs in the three districts to enable them to provide more comprehensive and appropriate community support services to persons with severe mental illness.