



東區尤德夫人那打素醫院

PAMELA YOUDE NETHERSOLE EASTERN HOSPITAL

30 June 2011

Doctor the Honourable KL Leung  
Chairman, Panel on Health Services  
Legislative Council Secretariat  
Legislative Council Building  
8 Jackson Road, Central  
Hong Kong

Dear Dr Leung

**Re: Implementation of Hospital Accreditation  
in Hong Kong Public Hospitals**

I just notice that there will be a special meeting of Health Services Panel in Legislative Council regarding the captioned issue, I am writing to you as a doctor in a public hospital to express my view and share our experience.

I am the Chief of Services, Clinical Oncology Department in Pamela Youde Nethersole Eastern Hospital. Our department is responsible for providing non-surgical treatments for cancer patients. Both radiotherapy and chemotherapy are high-risk procedures, any incident can be disastrous. Our services are extremely complex as the processes involve not only doctors and nurses, but also pharmacists, medical physicists, radiation therapists, and technicians. Furthermore, all cancer patients and relatives are very anxious about their serious disease and treatment.

We believe that good quality management system is needed to ensure maximum patient safety and achieve best possible quality within our means. Hence, back in 2001, we initiated to review our service processes and go for ISO 9001 accreditation to ensure that our system does comply with international standards. The preparation process was indeed a pain-staking process. For 6 months we had to use our lunch time for various multidisciplinary meetings to streamline our service processes, to identify critical control points, to clearly define responsibilities, to set standards and quality objectives. These obviously incur lots of extra work and stress midst the

already-heavy clinical duties, some colleagues did grumble. However, the preparatory process also provides good opportunities for different colleagues to better understand each other's difficulties, to identify potential problems and to work as a team towards the common goal of enhancing patient care.

Once the system is established, it gradually becomes the culture to strive for continuous improvement, rectification of system pitfalls and preventive actions to minimize risks. With clear and detailed guidelines, training and competency assessment, and independent cross-checking of critical steps, junior colleagues actually find it easier to fulfill their service requirements.

We initiated this difficult task of external accreditation out of professional aspiration to improve patient safety and quality care, it is difficult to evaluate how much patients do understand and appreciate this great effort. But last October a patient sent me pages from a book entitled 'The Unforgettable Days – from Maoist to Christian' by Shuquan Hu. The author is a 71 years old gentleman who suffered from prostate cancer and he described his experience of receiving treatment in our department. He wrote "Most people might be scared on hearing the name clinical oncology department which deals with cancer patients, yet in reality this department is the best unit in PYNEH. This can be proved by the ISO9002 metal plate on the wall of the waiting hall which looks like a hotel lounge.....Apart from the good environment, they also have updated facilities and equipment as well as helpful nurses and staff. This boosted my confidence in PYNEH's ability in giving me the best treatment on my prostate cancer." I quote this not because I wish to advertise our department, but to show that patients do notice and care, and they find all these efforts very helpful. Such patient appreciation is the most gratifying reward for doctors in the private hospital.

The implementation of hospital accreditation in Hong Kong public hospitals is a valuable step forward. This is hospital-wide and the ACHS Standards are more healthcare-specific. It is true that it takes lots of extra time and effort to learn and implement the requirements, and this cause extra stress to all staff midst our very eavy workload. The successful accreditation in the 5 pilot hospitals is indeed hard-earned. But this is a good proof to the public that HK hospitals do provide services up to international standards, and that we really do try our best to enhance patient care.

In conclusion, as a doctor working in a public hospital, I would like to show my support to the implementation of hospital accreditation. Although this does cause

loads of extra work and pressure, this is important for cross-department and cross-discipline collaboration in enhancing patient care, which is the ultimate goal of our profession. I earnestly hope that this special meeting would allow all parties to listen and share views from different angles and provide constructive advice for the government to implement the scheme as a long term strategy.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Lee', written over a horizontal line.

Dr Anne Lee

Chief of Service

Department of Clinical Oncology

Pamela Youde Nethersole Eastern Hospital