

**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
PANEL ON WELFARE SERVICES**

**Subcommittee on Residential and Community Care Services
for Persons with Disabilities and the Elderly
Follow-up to the meeting on 12 November 2010**

Provision of Support Services for Demented Elders

At the meeting of the Subcommittee on Residential and Community Care Services for Persons with Disabilities and the Elderly under the Legislative Council Panel on Welfare Services on 12 November 2010, the Chairman requested the Administration to provide written responses to various enquiries about support services for demented elders. This paper sets out the Administration's response.

(a) The plan and timetable for extending the memory clinics to all the 18 districts over the territory

2. The Hospital Authority (HA) is formulating an Elderly People Service Plan for planning the development of services for elderly people in the long term. HA will also set up a Task Force to review the existing services and support for demented patients, including the role of memory clinics.

(b) The feasibility of providing services for demented elders at dedicated service units and day care centres/units for the elderly

3. With funding from the Lotteries Fund, the Social Welfare Department (SWD) set up Day Care Centres for Demented Elderly and Dementia Care Units in residential care homes for the elderly (RCHEs) on a trial basis from 1999 to 2002. Making reference to the consultancy report on this trial project and taking into consideration the actual operation of the relevant service units, we came to the conclusion that the provision of services for demented elders, like that for other frail elders, should adopt an integrated and continuum-of-care approach, to cater for the care needs of service users at different stages.

4. To incorporate the services for demented elders into the mainstream day care services, SWD provided additional manpower and equipment to the

Day Care Centres/Units for the Elderly (DEs/DCUs), and organised regular training on care for demented elders for their professional staff and care workers. In order to further enhance the caring capability of the DEs/DCUs, the Financial Secretary announced in this year's Budget that the coverage of the Dementia Supplement will be extended to all DEs/DCUs, which will benefit about 440 service users.

5. We consider that it is feasible for the DEs/DCUs to provide services for demented elders. The Administration also welcomes the welfare sector to set up self-financing dementia services to complement the publicly funded services.

(c) Whether the Administration would spearhead the collaboration between the medical and welfare sectors in providing support services for demented elders

6. On the medical side, the Department of Health (DH) and HA both provide services for demented elders, including clinic services of DH's Elderly Health Centres and rehabilitation services of HA's psychiatric department and memory clinics. On the social welfare side, non-governmental organisations subsidized by the Government provide a wide range of care and support services to demented elders, such as community care services, residential care services and carer support services.

7. Besides, the Administration has been encouraging collaboration between the medical and social welfare sectors in order to support the demented elders and their carers. At present, the community geriatric assessment teams and psychogeriatric outreach teams of the seven clusters under HA provide the elders living in RCHEs (including patients with dementia) with outreach healthcare services and support, for example, formulation of treatment plans, monitoring patients' recovery progress, and providing relevant information and training to family members and carers of demented elders as well as staff of RCHEs. The services of HA's community geriatric assessment teams currently cover about 650 RCHEs, whereas the psychogeriatric outreach services cover all subvented RCHEs and over 100 private RCHEs in the territory. The Chief Executive announced in the Policy Address in October last year that HA would gradually strengthen its psychogeriatric outreach services in the next three years. About 80 additional RCHEs are expected to be covered this year, thereby benefiting more elders.

(d) Whether the Administration would allocate more resources to, and expand the membership of, District Elderly Community Centres with a view to strengthening the early identification of dementia

8. The 41 District Elderly Community Centres (DECCs) in the territory now provide both elders and their carers with diversified services, such as counselling and referral services, assistance in processing long term care applications, emotional support, social and healthcare education, social and recreational activities and meal services, etc. In 2008, the Government allocated additional funding to all the elderly centres to enhance their outreach services, with a view to identifying more needy elders in the community and referring them to suitable services or medical treatment. As regards the number of members, DECCs adopt an open membership system, and there is no quota for enrolment.

(e) In addition to studying the proposal of providing cash allowance for family carers of demented elders, the Administration should enhance the support services for carers to alleviate their burden and relieve their stress

9. The Administration has been providing a range of support services for family members and carers of demented elders (including provision of information, training and counselling, assistance in forming carers' mutual-assistance groups, setting up resource centres, and giving demonstration and lending rehabilitation equipment, etc.) to help alleviate their pressure. In addition, all subvented RCHEs and DEs/DCUs are providing residential and day respite services respectively for the relief of carers.

10. On the other hand, the Government will continue to strengthen the community care services for the elderly so that more frail elders (including demented elders) can age at home. In this year's Budget, the Financial Secretary announced that the Administration would allocate additional recurrent funding of \$76 million to provide 1 500 additional Enhanced Home and Community Care Services places and 185 day care service places so that more elders can benefit from the services.

11. Cherishing the family is one of the core values of our society. The Administration has therefore been promoting mutual family support, and we

value contributions made by family carers to their family. The various types of support services provided by the Government to family carers aim at helping them fulfill their family responsibilities. We believe that the existing arrangement can provide appropriate professional support, which can better address the needs of carers than the provision of cash allowance.

(f) Provision of training programmes on care for demented elders, especially for domestic helpers taking care of demented elders

12. The Elderly Commission, Labour and Welfare Bureau and SWD launched the District-based Scheme on Carer Training in October 2007. Elderly centres are invited to collaborate with community organisations in running elderly-care training courses which cover the knowledge and skills one needs in caring for demented elders.

13. The scheme imposes no restriction on enrolment. Individuals (including family members of elders or domestic helpers) who are interested in basic elderly care skills may participate.

(g) Provision of Dementia Supplement to all demented elders staying in RCHEs

14. To enhance care and support for demented elders staying in subsidised RCHEs, SWD has been allocating Dementia Supplement to subvented RCHEs since 1999, so that the RCHEs concerned can employ additional professional staff to take care of demented elders and arrange training for them. The coverage of the Dementia Supplement has been extended to private RCHEs participating in the Enhanced Bought Place Scheme since 2009-10.

15. The Financial Secretary has announced in this year's Budget that additional recurrent funding of \$25 million will be allocated to increase the amount of the Dementia Supplement. It is estimated that about 4 450 demented elders residing in RCHEs will benefit from the additional provision.

**Labour and Welfare Bureau
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