

Information Paper
9 March 2012

**Legislative Council
Panel on Security**

**Measures to Tackle Issues Relating to
Mainland Pregnant Women Giving Birth in Hong Kong**

This paper briefs members on the latest position of the implementation of complementary immigration control measures by the Immigration Department (ImmD) in relation to non-local pregnant women giving birth in Hong Kong.

Background

2. In recent years, the demand for local obstetric service by non-local pregnant women, in particular Mainland pregnant women, has been rapidly growing. Since 1 February 2007, the Hospital Authority (HA) has implemented revised arrangements for obstetric service for non-local pregnant women to ensure that Hong Kong resident women are given priority for proper obstetric service. The new arrangements also seek to deter dangerous behaviour of non-local pregnant women seeking emergency hospital admissions through Accident and Emergency Departments (A&EDs) shortly before labour. Under the revised arrangements, non-local pregnant women who wish to seek obstetric service in public hospitals have to make prior booking¹. Those who have secured a booking will be issued a booking confirmation certificate by the

¹ Under the revised arrangements implemented since 1 February 2007, all non-local pregnant women who wish to seek obstetric services in public hospitals have to make prior booking and pay a package charge of \$39,000. For cases of delivery by emergency admission through the A&EDs and /or without having attended any antenatal attendance at a HA specialist outpatient clinic during the concerned pregnancy, the charge would be \$48,000.

relevant hospital.

3. To complement the revised arrangements, the ImmD, assisted by health surveillance assistants and medical personnel deployed by the Department of Health (DH), has strengthened surveillance of non-local pregnant women who are at an advanced stage of pregnancy (28 weeks for above) at immigration control points. Non-local pregnant women are required to produce their booking confirmation certificates issued by local hospitals, and immigration officers will instantly verify their authenticity with the hospitals concerned. Those who failed to produce a booking confirmation certificate, or with doubtful purpose of visit may be refused permission to land and be repatriated immediately.

4. Since the implementation of the complementary immigration control measures in 2007, the ImmD has conducted interviews on 204 000 Mainland pregnant women, of which 10 800 were refused permission to land and repatriated to the Mainland. Please see Annex 1 for relevant figures.

Enhanced deterrent measures

5. Though the above measures have been implemented for some years, the demand of local obstetric service by Mainland pregnant women has continued to increase in recent years. The total number of live births in Hong Kong rose from 70 900 in 2007 to 95 500 in 2011, and babies born to Mainland women rose from 27 600 to over 43 900 over the same period. The Food and Health Bureau announced, in June 2011, further measures with a view to limiting the

number of non-local pregnant women giving birth in Hong Kong and in 2012, such number will be limited to 35 000 (including 3 400 delivery places in the HA and around 31 000 in private hospitals).

6. To complement the above further measures and to tackle the problem of non-local women taking the risk of seeking emergency deliveries at the A&EDs, the ImmD has, since December 2011, extensively enhanced the complementary immigration control measures on non-local pregnant women. These include:

- (a) stepping up inspection of non-local pregnant women at major control points through internal re-deployment. The DH has also deployed an additional 18 health surveillance assistants to the control points to enhance assistance in surveillance work since end of February 2012;
- (b) analysing the usual tactics and trend of “gate-crashing” by non-local pregnant women through collection of intelligence and data, taking corresponding surveillance measures, and conducting joint raids with other departments;
- (c) since some non-local pregnant women who without a booking seeking emergency deliveries at the A&EDs are found to have overstayed in Hong Kong, the ImmD will step up enforcement and removal actions against these overstayers. From October to December 2011, the ImmD prosecuted over 100 overstaying non-local pregnant women giving birth in Hong Kong, and all were convicted;

- (d) strengthening cooperation with the Police, conducting investigation and securing evidence against individual or corporate intermediaries that are involved in illicit activities in arranging for entry of non-local pregnant women to Hong Kong. Intermediaries who aid, abet, counsel or procure the commission by non-local pregnant women of any offence shall be guilty of the like offence and subject to criminal liability².

Strengthened communications with the Mainland authorities

7. The ImmD also maintains close liaison with the Mainland authorities to deter non-local pregnant women who without a booking take the risk of seeking emergency deliveries at the A&EDs. Since December 2011, the ImmD referred to the Mainland authorities Mainland pregnant women who were refused permission to land, so as to assist the appropriate follow up by the Mainland authorities in deterring the dangerous behaviour of seeking emergency hospital admissions through A&EDs shortly before labour.

Effectiveness of the measures

8. Since the measures to further limit the number of non-local women giving birth in Hong Kong were implemented in June 2011, there has been a monthly average of 138 cases of non-local pregnant women giving birth through A&EDs in 2011, compared to the monthly average of 66 in 2010. The figure

² In February 2012, a Mainland intermediary arranging for non-local pregnant women giving birth in Hong Kong was convicted of breach of condition of stay and making a false representation to an immigration officer and sentenced to 10 months' imprisonment.

in October 2011 rose to 194. Since the implementation of the enhanced immigration control measures in December 2011 stated in paragraph 6 above, the number of cases dropped to 94 from 1-25 February 2012 (please see Annexes 2 and 3 for relevant figures.)

Advice sought

9. Members are invited to note the content of the paper.

Security Bureau

March 2012

Annex 1

Secondary Examination on Mainland Pregnant Visitors

Year	No. of interceptions	No. of secondary examinations	No. of repatriation after refusal of entry
2007 (Feb to Dec)	55 066	32 468	2 499
2008	69 227	36 836	1 971
2009	71 225	40 163	2 348
2010	78 140	44 374	1 634
2011	77 103	44 619	1 931
2012 (as at 26 Feb)	9 688	5 683	411
Total	360 449	204 143	10 794

**Non-local Pregnant Women
Giving Birth in Public Hospitals via A&EDs**

Year	Number
2007 ¹	1 723
2008	1 009
2009	713
2010	796
2011 ²	1 656
2012 (As at 25 Feb)	274

¹Since 1 February 2007, the Hospital Authority (HA) has implemented revised arrangements for obstetric service for non-local pregnant women. Under the revised arrangements, non-local pregnant women who wish to seek obstetric service in public hospitals have to make prior booking

²The Food and Health Bureau announced in June 2011 further measures including the number of non-local pregnant women giving birth in Hong Kong in 2012 to be limited to 35 000 (including 3 400 delivery places for non-local women in the HA and around 31 000 planned number of deliveries in private hospitals).

**Non-local Pregnant Women
Giving Birth in Public Hospitals via A&EDs**

Month	Number of cases	
	Booked	Non-booked
Jun 2011	45	77
July 2011	47	108
August 2011	40	116
September 2011	26	149
October 2011	30	194
November 2011	13	192
December 2011	15	189
January 2012	18	145
February 2012 (As at 25 Feb)	17	94