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Panel on Health Services

**Background brief prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat
for the meeting on 20 May 2013**

Phase one development of North Lantau Hospital

Purpose

This paper summarizes the concerns of the members of the Panel on Health Services ("the Panel") on the phase one development of the North Lantau Hospital ("NLH") project.

Background

2. The Kowloon West ("KW") Cluster of the Hospital Authority ("HA") serves the population of Mong Kok, Wong Tai Sin, Sham Shui Po, Kwai Tsing, Tsuen Wan and North Lantau (including Tung Chung) which have an estimated population of 1.9 million. There are seven hospitals in the KW Cluster, but none of them is located on Lantau Island. Taking into account the location of the Hong Kong International Airport ("HKIA") and some major tourist facilities in North Lantau and the need to cope with the development and population growth of the North Lantau New Town, the Government considers it necessary to construct a public hospital in North Lantau in order to meet the healthcare service demand in the area.

3. The NLH Project is implemented in two phases. Under phase one, a new public hospital would be built to provide, upon full commissioning, 180 beds (including 80 acute beds, 80 extended care beds and 20 day beds);

a 24-hour Accident and Emergency department; diagnostic and treatment facilities; and ambulatory care services including specialist out-patient clinics, primary care clinics, a day rehabilitation centre, an ambulatory surgery/day procedure centre and community care services. Phase two of the project would aim to meet the long-term demand for hospital services on Lantau Island. It is estimated that an additional 170 beds would be provided in NLH upon completion of the phase two development.

4. In January 2010, the Finance Committee approved a sum of \$2,482 million in money-of-the-day prices for the construction of NLH under phase one of the project. The construction works for phase one were expected to be completed by the end of 2012.

Deliberations of the Panel

5. The Panel held a meeting in June 2009 to discuss the phase one development of the NLH project. The deliberations and concerns of members are summarized below.

Cluster arrangement

6. Noting that the KW Cluster to which NLH belonged was the current largest cluster in HA, with a catchment population almost triple that of the smaller clusters, some members expressed concern that the construction of NLH would make the KW Cluster even more cumbersome.

7. According to the Administration, the acute hospital closest to North Lantau by land transport was Princess Margaret Hospital in the KW Cluster. Princess Margaret Hospital was also designated as the first hospital to receive victims in case of disasters occurred at HKIA located at Chek Lap Kok of North Lantau. For these reasons, North Lantau was placed under the catchment area of the KW Cluster. Moreover, the resident population on Lantau Island was projected to be around 123 100 by 2015. In the Administration's view, the relatively small population of North Lantau would not exert much pressure on the KW Cluster.

Services provided by NLH

8. Given that HKIA was situated in North Lantau and the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge would land on the Northwest of Lantau, some members expressed concern about NLH's capability of handling disasters with massive casualties. They also enquired whether NLH would serve as a trauma centre and provide neurosurgery service for victims of airport disasters.

9. According to the Administration, in the event of civil disasters, acute hospitals would operate in networks with support to each other and pre-hospital triage would be made in accordance with established protocols. For disasters occurred at HKIA or in North Lantau, Princess Margaret Hospital would be the major receiving trauma centre to provide tertiary medical care to victims sent by land transport whereas Tuen Mun Hospital would be the receiving hospital for victims sent by sea transport. Victims would also be sent by air transport to Tuen Mun Hospital or Pamela Youde Nethersole Eastern Hospital where necessary. Meanwhile, NLH would be responsible for dispatching medical teams to incident sites to provide urgent treatment as well as receiving minor injury cases. Members were advised that as NLH was not an acute tertiary hospital, its scope of services would not include the specialty of neurosurgery.

10. Pointing out that chronic patients living in Tung Chung had to travel a long distance to other hospitals in the KW Cluster for regular follow-up consultation, members were concerned about the scope of specialist out-patient services and primary care services to be provided by NLH.

11. The Administration advised that the specialist out-patient services provided by NLH was initially planned to cover medicine, surgery, gynaecology, paediatrics, orthopaedics and traumatology as well as psychiatry. It would also have eight primary care clinic suites to provide screening and assessment of medical conditions as well as primary curative care. The day rehabilitation centre in NLH would also provide comprehensive integrated rehabilitation and allied health services to chronic patients. That said, the Administration stressed that NLH would be a community hospital providing primary and a selected range of specialist services. Its specialist out-patient services would not be as comprehensive as an acute regional hospital.

Phase two of the NLH project

12. Members noted that the Administration would explore the introduction of public-private-partnership ("PPP") for the private sector to provide other medical facilities and services in the reserved area in addition to the 170 beds provided by the Government in the phase two development of the NLH project. In response to members' concern about the introduction of PPP, the Administration advised that a site adjacent to phase one of the NLH project was reserved for the development of phase two in order to meet the long term healthcare service needs of Lantau Island. The Administration would keep in view the service provision and demand in the area and explore the feasibility of introducing PPP which would proceed separately from phase one.

Recent development

13. According to the Administration, the construction of NLH was completed in late 2012. NLH will come into operation in phases. Initially, the daytime Accident and Emergency services will be provided in the third quarter of 2013, with service hours extended in phases to 24 hours subject to service needs and manpower availability. As regards outpatient services, following the introduction of medicine and psychiatry specialist outpatient services in 2013-2014, other specialties such as surgery, orthopaedics and traumatology, paediatrics and gynaecology will be introduced afterwards in phases.

14. Upon full operation, the manpower requirement for NLH is around 650 staff, including some 60 doctors and 170 nurses. At present, HA plans to deploy 18 doctors, 63 nurses and 45 allied health professionals to NLH in 2013-2014.

Relevant papers

15. A list of the relevant papers on the Legislative Council website is in the **Appendix**.

Appendix

Relevant papers on Phase one development of North Lantau Hospital

Committee	Date of meeting	Paper
Panel on Health Services	8.6.2009 (Item V)	Agenda Minutes

Council Business Division 2
Legislative Council Secretariat
14 May 2013