

**For information
on 28 November 2013**

**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
PANEL ON WELFARE SERVICES
PANEL ON HEALTH SERVICES**

JOINT SUBCOMMITTEE ON LONG-TERM CARE POLICY

Support for Persons Suffering from Dementia and Their Carers

PURPOSE

This paper briefs Members on the Government's measures to support persons with dementia and their carers.

BACKGROUND

2. Dementia is a syndrome, usually of a chronic or progressive nature, caused by a variety of brain illnesses that affect memory, thinking, behaviour and ability to perform everyday activities. As dementia affects the physical, psychological and cognitive domains of a person, it is a multi-faceted problem requiring multiple domains of services including medical intervention as well as formal and informal social care. To this end, the Government is committed to providing holistic medical and social care services for patients with dementia and their carers. Through a multi-disciplinary and cross-sectoral team approach, the Food and Health Bureau (FHB), the Labour and Welfare Bureau (LWB), the Department of Health (DH), the Hospital Authority (HA), the Social Welfare Department (SWD) and other relevant parties are working closely on the provision of various service programmes for patients with dementia.

MEDICAL SERVICES

3. At present, there are around 11 400 patients with varying degree of dementia being followed up by the psychiatric departments of HA. HA adopts a multi-disciplinary approach in the treatment and care of dementia patients. Multi-disciplinary teams led by doctors will formulate individualised treatment plans that include medication, cognitive training, healthcare assessment and

rehabilitation services having regard to the conditions of individual patients, and follow-up services are provided accordingly to suit their needs.

4. We recognise the importance of tackling the behavioural and psychological problems of patients with dementia in a community setting. To this end, HA encourages patient empowerment by providing patients' education and carer training. HA also arranges social services referrals as appropriate for the patients with dementia and their families with a view to providing them with comprehensive support in the community setting.

Psychogeriatric outreach service

5. Elderly patients residing at residential care homes for the elderly (RCHEs), including those suffering from dementia, are supported by HA's outreach services through its community geriatric assessment teams and psychogeriatric outreach teams. Services provided include the formulation of treatment plans, monitoring of patients' recovery and follow-up consultations.

6. At present, HA's community geriatric assessment teams cover about 650 RCHEs while the psychogeriatric outreach services cover most of the subvented RCHEs and over 200 private RCHEs in the territory.

LONG-TERM CARE SERVICES

7. The Government strives to enhance the support for the elderly who have long-term care needs, including those suffering from dementia. Under the Standardised Care Need Assessment Mechanism for Elderly Services (SCNAMES), elderly persons who have been assessed to have impairment at moderate level or above would be eligible for subsidised long-term care services. SWD provides a wide spectrum of subsidised long-term care services, including community care services and residential care services, to cater for the care needs of service users. To suit the needs of the elderly persons with dementia at different stages, an integrated and client-centred approach is adopted to ensure a continuum of care. Service units will draw up individual care plans for the elderly persons having regard to their health conditions and care needs. The care plans will be reviewed and updated regularly to cater for their changing circumstances. To provide better support for elderly persons with dementia and their carers, SWD has implemented special support measures as set out in ensuing paragraphs.

Provision of Dementia Supplement

8. To facilitate service units to enhance care support for elderly persons with dementia, SWD has been allocating Dementia Supplement to subvented RCHEs, private RCHEs participating in the Enhanced Bought Place Scheme (EBPS) and subsidised day care centres/units for the elderly (DEs/DCUs). With the allocation of Dementia Supplement, RCHEs and DEs/DCUs may employ additional professional staff, including occupational therapists, nurses and social workers, etc., or purchase relevant professional services to take care of elderly persons with dementia and to organise training programmes for them. DEs/DCUs may also use Dementia Supplement to provide training programmes and services for elderly persons with dementia as well as supportive services for their carers as necessary.

9. In 2013-14, a total recurrent allocation of \$216.9 million is provided for RCHEs and DEs/DCUs under Dementia Supplement. The Dementia Supplement is allocated to a total of 256 eligible RCHEs and 66 eligible DEs/DCUs for about 5 600 beneficiaries.

Improvement of dementia care facilities at elderly care service units

10. SWD has allocated resources to improve the facilities at RCHEs and DEs/DCUs to ensure better care and safety of elderly persons with dementia. These include purchase of bed monitoring systems, anti-wandering systems, facilities for multi-sensory therapy, etc.

Improvement of spatial standards at DEs

11. Recognising the mobility needs of frail elderly persons with dementia, SWD has enhanced the spatial standard for DEs since October 2010, including the setting up of multi-sensory area for providing training for elderly persons with dementia and increasing the size of the physiotherapy room and dining/activity room, in the planning of new and reprovisioned DEs. From 2011-12 to 2015-16, seven DEs with new spatial standard, providing a total of 408 day care places, have commenced/will commence service. For the existing DEs which do not meet the prescribed spatial standard, SWD will assist the service providers in the acquisition of new/additional premises to meet the enhanced spatial standards and will fund the capital works.

Provision of training for elderly persons with dementia

12. At present, all subsidised RCHEs and DEs/DCUs for the elderly provide dementia-specific training for elderly persons with dementia, including

cognitive training, memory training, reality orientation, reminiscence therapy, etc. Operators of these service units will provide a relaxing environment for suitable stimulation (e.g. directional signs) to elderly persons with dementia while at the same time avoiding exerting pressure (caused by noise or lighting, for instance) on them.

Training of Professional and Non-professional Staff

13. SWD organises regular training for professional (including social work staff and allied health professionals) and non-professional staff (including care workers and health workers) of elderly service units to enhance their knowledge of dementia and to strengthen their skills in caring for elderly persons with dementia. The training focuses on helping the staff concerned to understand the medical, psychological and care needs of elderly persons with dementia, to manage the common assessment tools and therapeutic approaches and support services that could be provided for the carers. A total of 456 staff, including 281 non-professional staff and 175 professional staff, attended the training programme in 2012-13. In 2013-14, the number of training places provided by SWD has increased to 480 places.

14. DH offers on-site training workshops for care workers by outreaching into RCHEs and DEs/DCUs. The training programme is supported by a multi-disciplinary team including doctors, nurses and allied health professionals. Various topics, such as recognition of dementia features, behavioural management and coping with carers' stress, are covered. To enhance training for elderly persons with dementia, DH has recently developed an integrated activity programme, which comprises elements of reality orientation, reminiscence and cognitive stimulation, for RCHEs' reference in organising training activities. HA's Community Geriatric Assessment Teams and Psychogeriatric Outreach Teams also provide on-site training to staff of RCHEs in managing elderly residents with dementia, as and when required.

Services for patients with early onset of dementia

15. Long-term care services are generally available for elderly persons who are aged 60 or above. For people who have early onset of dementia, they may apply for Integrated Home Care Services. Medical social services are also available in public hospitals and some specialist out-patient clinics to provide psychosocial intervention for patients, including persons with dementia, regardless of age. In addition, there are self-financing services for people with dementia provided by non-government and community organisations.

Extension of service hours of DEs and the introduction of the Pilot Scheme on Community Care Service Voucher for the Elderly

16. In addition to the above services which specifically target at elderly persons with dementia, SWD has been enhancing the provision of community care services (CCS) to further support our elderly citizens to age in the community. Such enhancements will also benefit elderly with dementia. Additional resources has been earmarked to extend the service hours of new DEs/DCUs for rendering better care and support to the frail elderly persons, including those suffering from dementia, and their carers. The extended service hours will be from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. from Mondays to Saturdays and from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. on Sundays and public holidays. One DE and two DCUs attached to RCHEs will commence operation with the provision of extended hours service in 2014-15. Also, SWD has launched the First Phase of the Pilot Scheme on Community Care Service Voucher for the Elderly in September 2013 in eight selected districts, with a total of 1 200 CCS vouchers to be issued. The voucher scheme has enabled service providers to introduce new service packages that suit the individual needs of the voucher users. All the 62 Recognised Service Providers (RSPs) participating in the Pilot Scheme would provide both centre-based and home-based CCS to frail elderly persons, including those who with dementia. Among them, six RSPs have drawn up specific service packages for elderly persons with dementia.

SUPPORT FOR CARERS

17. Carers play a key role in taking care of their elderly family members who suffered from dementia. The Government has implemented various measures to support them and relieve their pressure.

Respite Service

18. Respite service aims at providing support for carers of elderly persons, including those suffering from dementia, relieving their stress and allowing them to take a short break when necessary. In addition to the 11 designated residential respite places provided by subvented RCHEs, SWD also makes use of the casual vacancies of subsidised places in all subvented nursing homes and care-and-attention homes, contract homes as well as private RCHEs participating in the EBPS to provide residential respite service. Meanwhile, day respite service is being provided by 66 subsidised DEs/DCUs across the territory. As at September 2013, SWD designated 123 day respite places at these DEs/DCUs. Individual DEs/DCUs may also make use of any casual vacancy to provide respite service. SWD will continue to designate day respite places in newly established subsidised DEs/DCUs.

Training for carers

19. The Elderly Commission (EC), LWB and SWD launched the District-based Scheme on Carer Training in 2007 with a view to promoting basic knowledge of elderly care. Elderly centres are invited to collaborate with community organisations in running elderly-care training courses which cover the knowledge and skills needed in caring for the demented elderly. Each of the 119 participating elderly centres was provided with one-off seed money of \$50,000 for organising carer training programmes. As at March 2013, over 10 000 carers had completed the training.

20. DH has been producing health education materials (such as pamphlets, books and videos) and using various media (such as newsletters, telephone hotline and web page) to provide professional advice on the caring techniques of patients with dementia and to address problems frequently encountered by their carers. DH also collaborated with SWD and non-Government organisations to organise dementia seminars, workshops and health talks to provide practical tips on dementia care.

Other Support Measures

21. In addition, the 210 elderly centres, 66 DEs/DCUs and 85 home care service teams throughout the territory have been providing a range of support services for carers of elderly persons with dementia, including the provision of information, counselling, assistance in forming carers' mutual-assistance groups, provision and loan of rehabilitation equipment, etc. to help alleviate their pressure.

PUBLIC EDUCATION

22. DH adopts an evidence-based approach in devising health education materials. DH has produced health education materials (such as pamphlets, books and videos) and used various media such as media interview and webpage to raise community awareness, promote dementia care and remove stigma about dementia. DH also provides on-demand training on symptoms and special needs of dementia patients to frontline staff of public and private companies. HA has made available information relating to dementia care and community support for carers of demented persons on its "Smart Patient Website".

ADVICE SOUGHT

23. Members are invited to note the content of this paper.

**Food and Health Bureau
Labour and Welfare Bureau
Department of Health
Hospital Authority
Social Welfare Department**

November 2013