

Opening Remarks
by Secretary for Food and Health
at the Public Accounts Committee hearing on 16 December 2014
in response to the Director of Audit's Report No. 63 :
Chapter 2 – Provision of Health Services for the Elderly

Chairman and Members,

First of all, I would like to thank the Director of Audit and his colleagues for conducting a comprehensive and thorough value-for-money audit on the elderly healthcare services provided by the Department of Health (DH) and the Hospital Authority (HA), and putting forward many valuable opinions and recommendations in this regard. We agree with the recommendations made in the report. The DH and the HA will also, taking into account audit recommendations, actively follow up on issues requiring attention and promptly adopt relevant improvement measures mentioned in our response, so as to further enhance the healthcare services for the elderly.

Before responding to the questions and comments of the Public Accounts Committee, I would like to reiterate that the Government will enhance elderly healthcare services in a bid to tackle the challenges presented by our ageing population.

In the middle of this year, the HA launched the General Outpatient Clinic Public-Private Partnership Programme which was first piloted in Kwun Tong, Wong Tai Sin and Tuen Mun districts. Under this programme, hypertensive patients who are in stable clinical condition and habitually attend the HA's general out-patient clinics may choose to receive treatment from the participating private doctors in the districts. Depending on the feedback of the patients and the participating private doctors, the Administration will consider extending the programme to other districts progressively over the coming years. Apart from relieving the pressure on the HA's out-patient services, this programme helps promote the family doctor concept and provides more appropriate primary care services, including preventive care services, for the elderly.

As for the concerns mentioned in the report, the DH will actively follow up on the review of the services of elderly health centres, enhance the service effectiveness of the modus operandi for the provision of health promotion activities by the visiting health teams, and improve the administration of the Elderly Health Care Voucher Scheme, etc. The HA will also make every effort to shorten the waiting time for specialist out-patient services, optimise the appointment scheduling arrangements, extend the cross-cluster referral arrangements and provide community geriatric assessment team service at more residential care homes for the elderly.

Later, the Director of Health and the Chief Executive of the HA will give a detailed account of the service improvements and relevant measures in response to the recommendations made in the report. Thank you, Chairman.

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