

**立法會**  
**Legislative Council**

LC Paper No. CB(2)612/14-15(05)

Ref : CB2/PL/HS

**Panel on Health Services**

**Background brief prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat  
for the meeting on 19 January 2015**

**Expansion of United Christian Hospital**

**Purpose**

This paper summarizes the concerns of the members of the Panel on Health Services ("the Panel") on the expansion of United Christian Hospital ("UCH").

**Background**

2. UCH is a regional acute general hospital providing a comprehensive range of acute, extended care, ambulatory and community medical services to residents in the catchment area of the Kowloon East ("KE") cluster covering Kwun Tong and Sai Kung districts. It was established in 1973 and had an extension project completed in 1999.

3. According to the Administration, the population in Kwun Tong and Sai Kung districts is projected to reach 1 190 400 in 2021, among which the elderly population aged 65 or above in the two districts is projected to reach 203 000 in 2021. As public hospital services in the KE cluster and facilities in UCH are inadequate to meet the increasing service demand arising from the growing and aging population, the Administration briefed the Panel in March 2012 on the proposed expansion of UCH to improve its facilities and enhance its service capacity. The proposed expansion project involves demolition of three existing hospital blocks (i.e. Blocks F, G and H) and low block of Block P of UCH for the construction of a new ambulatory block (i.e. Block A). An extension to one of the existing hospital blocks (i.e. Block S) will also be constructed. Some

services at existing hospital blocks will be moved to the new ambulatory block and the new extension block upon their completion. The areas so vacated will then be converted and renovated for improvement, expansion and rationalization of clinical and supporting services.

### **Deliberations of the Panel**

4. The Panel discussed the proposed expansion of UCH at its meeting held on 12 March 2012. The deliberations and concerns of members are summarized below.

#### Scope of the expansion project

5. Members noted that the proposed project would expand the service capacity of the ambulatory care service, cancer service, inpatient convalescent and rehabilitation service, and accident and emergency ("A&E") service of UCH. While members were generally in support of the project, they were concerned about whether the increase in the number of beds from about 1 400 to around 1 700 after the expansion could meet the increasing inpatient service demand of the growing and aging population in the KE cluster.

6. The Administration advised that the proposal to increase 300 beds in UCH had taken into account the service needs arising from the anticipated growing and aging population in the KE cluster. Together with the additional provision of some 200 inpatient beds under the expansion project of the Tseung Kwan O Hospital and the service improvement in the Haven of Hope Hospital, it was hoped that by 2021, the service capacity of the three hospitals in the KE cluster would be able to cope with the service demand.

7. On the question of whether the expansion would strengthen the existing inadequate inpatient convalescent and rehabilitation service as well as the A&E service in the KE cluster, the Administration advised that the opening of additional extended care wards would expand the capacity of the convalescent and rehabilitation service at UCH. In addition, an Emergency Medicine Ward would be provided under the project to help reducing UCH's inpatient burden and avoid unnecessary hospitalization.

#### Implementation of the project

8. In response to members' concern about how the Hospital Authority ("HA") could ensure that patients would not be affected during the construction period, the Administration advised that HA would carry out necessary decanting works

for demolition of three existing hospital blocks and an annex building to ensure that patient services would not be affected. All the clinical and allied health services would be maintained during the construction period.

9. Some members considered the time required to complete the project, i.e. some nine years from 2012 to 2021, too long. They urged the Administration to shorten the completion period of the project.

10. According to the Administration, the proposed project would be implemented in two stages, namely Stage I preparatory works and Stage II main works. The preparatory works and the main works were planned to commence in 2012 and 2014 respectively. The former comprised site inspection, surveying, detailed design, preparation of tender document and tender evaluation, etc. As regards the main works, it was estimated that the demolition of existing blocks and the construction of a new ambulatory block would complete in three and a half year's time. For the refurbishment of part of Blocks P and S for expansion of facilities, it was necessary to carry out the works in phases so as to ensure that all clinical and allied health services would not be affected during the project period. The Administration would endeavour to shorten the time required for completion of the project in the detailed design and planning stage.

### **Recent developments**

11. The Finance Committee ("FC") approved on 13 July 2012 an amount of \$352.3 million in money-of-the-day prices to carry out the preparatory works of the expansion project of UCH. At the Panel meeting on 20 January 2014 to receive a briefing from the Secretary for Food and Health on the 2014 Policy Address in relation to health matters, members noted that the preparatory works of UCH had commenced in August 2012 and would later proceed with the outline sketch design and detailed design for the main works. Subject to funding approval by FC, the Administration planned to proceed with the main works in 2014-2015 for completion of the whole expansion project in 2021.

12. In the context of discussing the refurbishment of Hong Kong Buddhist Hospital at the Panel meeting on 19 May 2014, members noted that HA was reviewing and assessing the overall demand for and supply of healthcare services in Kowloon, taking into account various factors including the rate of population growth and aging, changes in service models, and new developments in medical technology and medical services. The review was targeted to be completed in 2014.

**Relevant papers**

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

Council Business Division 2  
Legislative Council Secretariat  
16 January 2015

**Relevant papers on the expansion of United Christian Hospital**

<b>Committee</b>	<b>Date of meeting</b>	<b>Paper</b>
Panel on Health Services	12.3.2012 (Item V)	<a href="#">Agenda</a> <a href="#">Minutes</a>

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