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Department of Health
Hong Kong
Special Administrative Region

11 February 2000

Department of Health Standing Circular No. 4/2000

**Emergency Treatment for Persons Accidentally Injured
in the Vicinity of Clinics**

(Note : Distribution of this Circular is Scale A,
i.e. it should be read by all officers.)

A recent traffic accident outside a Department of Health clinic has stimulated much discussion on whether clinic staff should provide emergency treatment to persons injured in accidents in the vicinity of clinics.

2. Clinic staff owe a duty primarily to clients within the clinics and are not required to provide outreach emergency service. However, if clinic staff should be approached by members of the public to provide emergency treatment for the injured outside the clinic, they should exercise discretion taking into consideration professional judgement of the prevailing circumstances and his/her professional obligation to the injured, in keeping with reasonable expectation of the public towards the medical and nursing professions. Since circumstances vary from case to case, the Department has made the following suggestions to assist staff to decide systematically and quickly on whether they are in a position to offer assistance :-

- (i) Obtain from persons seeking help details of the incident, such as location of the accident, number of persons injured and their conditions. Medical and nursing staff should call or assist in calling 999 for ambulance service as soon as practicable.
- (ii) Clinic staff should demonstrate team spirit and be mutually supportive of decisions made by members of the team. If circumstances of the clinic permit and the decision is to provide emergency treatment, medical and nursing staff should act jointly and support each other.

We are committed to providing quality client-oriented service

- (iii) Upon making the decision to assist, staff should inform other colleagues.
 - (iv) A set of portable first aid equipment and medical supplies should be available at all times.
3. Clinic staff should hold regular discussions on the subject matter in order to develop a mechanism to respond effectively to urgent calls.
4. Medical and nursing colleagues discharging their professional obligations to injured persons outside their clinics would be regarded as if they were on duty. Also, the Department encourages all medical staff to take insurance cover against professional indemnities.

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for Director of Health