



中華人民共和國香港特別行政區政府總部衛生福利及食物局
Health, Welfare and Food Bureau
Government Secretariat, Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region
The People's Republic of China

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Clerk to Public Accounts Committee
LegCo Secretariat
(Attn : Miss Sandy Chu)
Legislative Council Building
8 Jackson Road
Central

BY FAX : 2537 1204

Dear Miss Chu,

**The Director of Audit's Report on the
results of value for money audits (Report No. 38)**

Chapter 5: Residential services for the elderly

Thank you for your letter of 9 July seeking additional information further to the hearing on 4 July.

At the hearing I reiterated that although we have not abolished the planning ratio of 5 infirmary beds per 1,000 population aged 65 or above set in 1981, we consider that this ratio which was set over twenty years ago is no longer appropriate and that we should review the planning basis for the provision of infirmary beds.

As explained in my letter of 24 May, there have been significant developments in the provision of medical and care services for frail elders. The Hospital Authority, which was established in 1991, conducted reviews at three to five year intervals on the requirement of different types of hospital beds, including infirmary beds, on a territory-wide basis. In this context we set a target in 1997/98 to provide an additional 1,000 infirmary beds in the next

five years. We are on schedule in meeting this target. By March 2003, the ratio of infirmary beds per 1,000 elders will be increased to 4.

As for indicators for the provision of residential services for the elderly, every year we set out our initiatives and targets for the coming year in the policy address booklet on 'Care for Elders'. In addition to residential services, the 2001 policy address booklet covers other services for elders, such as financial support, housing, community care and support, active and healthy ageing and support for vulnerable elders.

In addition, we have set out a work plan for the next 12 months as follows:

- (a) We will formulate and implement a plan to phase out self-care hostels and homes for the aged, and to better meet the needs of these elders by matching them promptly to appropriate services such as community care and support services and housing assistance. The plan has been endorsed by the Elderly Commission and will start later this year;
- (b) We will implement a central registration system for subsidized long term care services, i.e. both community and residential care services currently provided under the social welfare system. This will obviate the need for elders to waitlist on different queues, sometimes managed by different agencies, for different services. Appropriate services will be assigned to elders in accordance with the care needs as assessed by the standardized care need assessment tool which we introduced in November 2000. We will complete this task within one year;
- (c) To better address the needs of both healthy and frail elders, as well as carers and the community at large, we plan to rationalize and re-engineer a wide spectrum of existing community care and support services in light of the outcome of a consultancy study on the provision of community care and support services conducted in 2000. These include home help teams, home care and meal teams, social centers and multi-service centers. We briefed the Legislative Council Panel on Welfare Services at its meeting on 8 July 2002 and according to the proposed work plan, rationalisation will start to

take place from March 2003;

- (d) To achieve continuum of care in residential care, all contracted homes put out for open tendering will include such a requirement. We also plan to provide additional places for elders of nursing home frailty in new contracted homes on admission to help reduce waiting time for nursing home. We have invited tenders for three homes on 12 July 2002 and each of these will contain a portion of subsidised places for elders of nursing home frailty; and
- (e) As regards the provision of infirmary beds, we will conduct a review which will cover the basis of planning, the changing needs for infirmary beds, and the role of the Hospital Authority in the provision of such beds. We will also examine the feasibility of providing infirmary care in a non-hospital setting to achieve cost-effectiveness and continuum of care for elders in the long term care system.

Yours sincerely,



(Dr E K Yeoh)

Secretary for Health, Welfare and Food

c.c. Secretary for the Financial Services and the Treasury
Director of Social Welfare
Director of Housing
Director of Health
Chief Executive, Hospital Authority
Director of Audit