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5 August 2002

Clerk, Public Accounts Committee
(Attn: Ms Miranda HON)
Legislative Council Building
8 Jackson Road, Central
Hong Kong

Dear Miss HON,

**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 22 July 2002. My comments are given below.

**Your question (a): Comments on the ratio of four infirmary beds
per 1,000 elderly persons by March 2003, as quoted in the
Secretary for Health, Welfare and Food's letter of 16 July 2002**

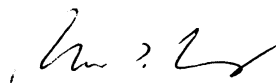
In his letter of 24 May 2002, the Secretary for Health, Welfare and Food informed the Public Accounts Committee that the planning ratio of five infirmary beds per 1,000 elderly persons aged 65 or over was adopted by the Medical Development Advisory Committee (MDAC) of the previous Medical and Health Department in 1981. Audit subsequently requested the Health, Welfare and Food Bureau for a copy of the related MDAC paper, which had not been made available to Audit during the audit review. According to the MDAC Paper No. 15-1980/81, the planning ratio was set in 1981 in the context of the hospitalised patients. On this basis, the estimated ratio of four infirmary beds per 1,000 elderly persons by March 2003, as quoted in the Secretary for Health, Welfare and Food's letter of 16 July 2002, would appear to be acceptable (see para. 2(a) in Appendix). However, it should be noted that applicants on the Central Infirmity Waiting List (CIWL) would need to wait for about 39 months before being admitted to infirmaries.

Your question (b): If only the infirmary beds designated for CIWL are taken into account, by March 2003, what the ratio of infirmary beds per 1,000 elderly persons will be

If only the infirmary beds designated for CIWL are taken into account, by March 2003, the ratio of infirmary beds per 1,000 elderly persons aged 65 or over will be 1.5 (see para. 2 (b) in Appendix).

A Chinese translation of this letter will be forwarded to you shortly.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David M T Leung', with a stylized flourish at the end.

(David M T LEUNG)
for Director of Audit

Appendix

Estimated ratios of infirmary beds per 1,000 elderly persons by March 2003

1. A target to provide 1,000 infirmary beds in the next 5 years was set in 1997-98 (see para. 7 of the Secretary for Health, Welfare and Food's letter of 24 May 2002). Of these 1,000 additional infirmary beds, 338 were designated for CIWL applicants (see para. 1(c) of the Secretary for Health, Welfare and Food's letter of 28 June 2002). Accordingly, the estimated numbers of infirmary beds available by March 2003 would be as follows:

	Number of infirmary beds for accommodating persons from the CIWL	Number of infirmary beds for accommodating patients transferred from general and acute wards	Total number of infirmary beds
	(a)	(b)	(c) = (a) + (b)
As at 31 March 1998	896	1,185	2,081
To be provided by March 2003	338	662	1,000
Available by March 2003	<u>1,234</u>	<u>1,847</u>	<u>3,081</u>

2. Based on the Census & Statistics Department's projected figure of population aged 65 or over of 796,800, by March 2003, the ratio per 1,000 elderly persons of infirmary beds for:

- (a) accommodating persons from the CIWL and patients transferred from general and acute wards would be **3.9** ($3,081 \div 796,800 \times 1,000$); and
- (b) accommodating persons from the CIWL would be **1.5** ($1,234 \div 796,800 \times 1,000$).