

**For Information
on 11 April 2011**

Legislative Council Panel on Health Services

Progress of Hospital Accreditation in Public Hospitals

PURPOSE

This paper reports to Members the progress of hospital accreditation in the Hospital Authority (HA).

BACKGROUND

2. With advancement in medical knowledge and technology, the quality of patient care has been enhanced through increasingly sophisticated treatment and procedures. However, the inherent risk of the new treatment methods has also increased at the same time. The healthcare providers worldwide, including HA, are endeavouring to improve service quality and sustain patient safety.

3. Hospital accreditation is widely adopted internationally as a useful measure to sustain and improve the quality of healthcare services by benchmarking with “best practices” in the field and international standards. To pursue continuous improvement in service quality and patient safety, a pilot scheme of hospital accreditation (the Pilot Scheme) was launched in May 2009 in partnership with the Australian Council on Healthcare Standards (ACHS)¹. A Steering Committee comprising representatives of the Food and Health Bureau, Department of Health (DH), HA and the Hong Kong Private Hospitals Association was also formed to oversee the development of a territory-wide hospital accreditation scheme in Hong Kong.

¹ The ACHS is an international accrediting agent with experience in launching hospital accreditation in different countries. Its organization, accreditation standards and surveyor training are all accredited by the International Society for Quality in Health Care (ISQua), which is the international organization that awards accreditation to external healthcare evaluation and standards setting bodies in currently 70 countries. HA identified ACHS as the partner in launching the Pilot Scheme through open tendering.

IMPLEMENTATION AND PROGRESS OF THE PILOT SCHEME

4. One of the key objectives of the Pilot Scheme is to develop a set of common hospital accreditation standards for measuring the performance of both public and private hospitals in various aspects in the long run. The set of common standards will include standards with regard to the management of medical incidents and complaints, and the commitment to continuous quality improvement. It is expected that through their participation in the accreditation process, both the public and private hospitals will strengthen their accountability and commitment to service quality and safety, thereby enhancing public confidence in the quality of healthcare services. The Pilot Scheme also aims to establish the infrastructure of accreditation, including the standards and surveyor system; to assess the feasibility of implementing accreditation program; to enhance public-private collaboration; and to evaluate and recommend on the future model of accreditation.

5. Five public hospitals (namely the Caritas Medical Centre, Pamela Youde Nethersole Eastern Hospital, Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Queen Mary Hospital and Tuen Mun Hospital) and three private hospitals (namely the Hong Kong Baptist Hospital, Hong Kong Sanatorium & Hospital and Union Hospital) joined the Pilot Scheme. The progress of the Pilot Scheme in public hospitals is set out in ensuing paragraphs.

Engagement and training of hospital staff

6. The process of hospital accreditation involves a major change in the quality management system of a hospital, as well as the work practice and culture of its staff. Active and committed participation of both the hospital management and frontline healthcare workers is the key to successful implementation of accreditation programme. A series of forums and workshop were organized under the Pilot Scheme to engage the staff of the participating HA hospitals to raise their awareness and understanding of the concept, requirements and benefit of hospital accreditation. The ACHS project team has also provided training and on-site support at the hospitals to assist the staff to prepare for the accreditation surveys and different aspects of the accreditation programme, including credentialing, safe environment and practices, risk management and governance and measuring of performance.

7. An information technology (IT) platform has also been developed for relevant staff of public and private sectors to exchange and share their experience and initiatives in managing hospital accreditation.

Development of Hong Kong standards

8. The ACHS Evaluation and Quality Improvement Program Standards contains 45 criteria that cover different aspects of hospital management, including clinical care, support services and corporate system. It focuses on patient experience and participation, coordinated care and quality system in the hospital operation. Given the difference in healthcare systems and services between Australia and Hong Kong, a Task Force on Standards under the Steering Committee has reviewed the ACHS program standards in collaboration with public and private hospitals and patient groups. Taken into account the local situation of Hong Kong, the Task Force formulated a set of locally adapted accreditation standards, which was subsequently endorsed by ACHS and ISQua in December 2010 and March 2011 respectively as the accreditation standards for Hong Kong.

Development of Local Surveyor System

9. An important element of Pilot Scheme and the future hospital accreditation system in Hong Kong is the development of a local team of surveyors for hospital accreditation. Under the Pilot Scheme, a total of 33 surveyors from DH, public and private hospitals have completed the training arranged by ACHC and were appointed as the ACHC (Hong Kong) Surveyors. They are qualified to conduct accreditation surveys for hospitals in Hong Kong and overseas.

EVALUATION OF THE PILOT SCHEME

10. With dedicated efforts of hospital staff and support of ACHS, the five participating HA hospitals completed their organization-wide surveys from June to October 2010 and were awarded 4-year full accreditation status. The hospitals were commended for good practices in a number of aspects such as pressure ulcer management, care of dying patients and deceased, safety practice and environment, etc. At the same time, recommendations were made for improvement and follow up in certain areas such as sterilization practices in

operating theatre, medication safety, documentation enhancement, etc.

11. According to the two studies conducted by the Nethersole School of Nursing of the Chinese University of Hong Kong on the Pilot Scheme, hospital staff have responded positively towards the accreditation programme, which also has the effect of enhanced team work and staff morale.

12. Apart from the public hospitals, the three private hospitals participating in the Pilot Scheme have also completed their organization-wide surveys and awarded 4-year full accreditation status by ACHS.

WAY FORWARD

13. The Steering Committee has reviewed and endorsed the evaluation findings of the Pilot Scheme in March 2011. Based on recommendations of the Steering Committee, the hospital accreditation programme will be extended to cover more hospitals, with a view to further enhancing quality and safety management of local hospitals to international standards. For HA, resources has been earmarked to extend the hospital accreditation programme to another 15 public hospitals in the next five years.

ADVICE SOUGHT

14. Members are invited to note the content of the paper.

Food and Health Bureau
Hospital Authority
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