

For information
on 12 November 2010

**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
PANEL ON WELFARE SERVICES**

**Subcommittee on Residential and Community Care Services
for Persons with Disabilities and the Elderly**

Provision of services for demented elders

Purpose

This paper sets out for Members' information the various kinds of services currently provided by the Government for demented elders.

Background

2. Like other developed economies, Hong Kong is facing the challenges of an ageing population. Hence, the Government has been allocating additional resources in recent years to enhance the care services for elders, including the support provided for demented elders and their carers. At present, a range of support services is provided to demented elders and their carers through the Social Welfare Department (SWD), the Hospital Authority (HA) and the Department of Health (DH).

Services provided by SWD for demented elders

3. Like caring for other frail elders with special care needs, SWD adopts an integrated and continuum-of-care approach in the provision of services for demented elders in order to meet their care needs at different stages. At present, the Government provides a range of subsidised care services for demented elders with long-term care needs, including residential care services, day care services and home-based services. In view of the special conditions and needs of demented elders, SWD has strengthened the support for them through different measures, including the following.

(i) Provision of Dementia Supplement to subsidised residential care homes and day care centres/units for the elderly

4. SWD has been providing a Dementia Supplement (DS) to all subvented residential care homes for the elderly (RCHEs) since 1999, enabling RCHEs to employ additional professional staff to provide care services and arrange training activities for demented elders. SWD has further extended the coverage of DS to include all private RCHEs participating in the Enhanced Bought Place Scheme since the 2009-10 financial year, and the annual allocation for DS has been increased from \$24.3 million in 2008-09 to \$42.5 million. DS now benefits about 4 200 demented elders. The Chief Executive announced in his recent Policy Address that the Government would further increase the DS rate for RCHEs and, for the first time, provide DS to day care centres/units for the elderly, so as to render more targeted services to demented elders.

(ii) Improvement of facilities at elderly service units and training of front-line staff

5. In recent years, SWD has continuously allocated resources to improve the facilities of RCHEs and day care centres/units for the elderly, including over \$30 million from the Lotteries Fund in 2009 for subsidised elderly service units to purchase bed monitoring systems, anti-wandering systems, facilities for multi-sensory therapy, etc.

6. At present, all subvented RCHEs and day care centres/units for the elderly provide dementia-specific training for demented elders, including cognitive training, memory training, reality orientation, reminiscence therapy, etc. Operators of RCHEs and day care centres/units will also provide a suitable environment so as to avoid exerting pressure (caused by noise or lighting, for instance) on demented elders, and offer a suitable level of stimulation (e.g. using directional signs).

7. In addition to providing training for dementia patients, SWD also provides regularly a series of training programmes on caring for demented elders for staff of elderly service units (including social workers, nurses, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, care workers and home helpers, etc.) so as to enhance their knowledge of dementia and strengthen their skills in caring for demented elders. This will enable them to manage emotional and behavioural problems of demented elders more effectively.

(iii) Provision of support for carers of demented elders

8. Apart from providing services for demented elders, we have also implemented measures to support the carers, for example, the District-based Scheme on Carer Training launched in 2007 which teaches participants basic knowledge of elderly care, including the skills in caring for demented elders. To date, over 2 400 carers have been trained and another some 4 000 carers are now receiving training under the Scheme.

9. In addition, all subvented RCHEs, contract RCHEs and day care centres/units for the elderly provide relief for carers through their residential respite or day respite services, so that carers can take a break or attend to other businesses, thereby relieving their stress.

Services provided to demented elders by HA and DH

10. Apart from the above-mentioned support services provided by SWD, HA and DH also offer a variety of support to demented elders and their carers. The details are as follows.

(i) Outreach services

11. The community geriatric assessment teams and psychogeriatric outreach teams of the seven clusters under HA provide needy elders (including patients with dementia) with timely healthcare services and support, for example, formulation of treatment plans, monitoring patients' recovery progress, carrying out follow-ups and providing relevant information and training to family members and carers of demented elders as well as staff of RCHEs. In respect of the support to RCHEs, the services of HA's community geriatric assessment teams currently cover about 650 RCHEs, whereas the psychogeriatric outreach services cover all subvented RCHEs and over 100 private RCHEs in the territory. The Chief Executive announced in his recent Policy Address that HA would gradually strengthen its psychogeriatric outreach services in the next three years. It is expected that about 80 additional RCHEs will be covered next year, thereby benefiting more elders.

12. Apart from that, the multi-disciplinary professional teams of DH's Elderly Health Service also visit RCHEs to provide their staff with training on caring for demented elders and give recommendations to individual RCHEs taking into account their unique circumstances, with a view to enhancing the capability of

RCHEs in the care of demented elders. The visiting health teams will also pay regular visits to the community to provide health education and training to carers of dementia patients.

(ii) Memory clinics

13. Some patients with dementia will be referred to the psychiatric departments or the memory clinics of the medical departments of public hospitals for assessment, treatment and monitoring of rehabilitation progress. Services provided by memory clinics for patients with cognitive impairment and dementia include -

- (1) multi-level medical and care assessment;
- (2) care plan formulation and long-term care service referrals;
- (3) pharmacological and non-pharmacological treatment;
- (4) cognitive training and rehabilitation exercise; and
- (5) carer support, education and social service referrals.

(iii) Public education

14. The Elderly Health Service of DH has all along been promoting public awareness of dementia and teaching the skills in taking care of demented elders through various channels, including press releases, television and radio interviews, distribution of newsletters, telephone information hotlines, internet websites, and the production of various health promotion materials (e.g. leaflets, VCDs and books).

Advice Sought

15. Members are invited to note the content of this paper.

Labour and Welfare Bureau
Food and Health Bureau
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