

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(2)486/12-13(05)

Ref : CB2/PL/HS

Panel on Health Services

**Background brief prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat
for the meeting on 21 January 2013**

Provision of obstetric services in the Tseung Kwan O Hospital

Purpose

This paper summarizes the concerns of the members of the Panel on Health Services ("the Panel") on the provision of obstetric services in the Tseung Kwan O Hospital ("TKOH").

Background

2. The Kowloon East Cluster serves the population of Kwun Tong, Tseung Kwan O ("TKO") and Sai Kung districts which have an estimated population of 980 000. There are three hospitals in the cluster, namely, United Christian Hospital ("UCH"), TKOH and Haven of Hope Hospital. With the rapid increase of population in TKO and Sai Kung, the existing facilities in TKOH are inadequate in terms of space and capacity to meet the future service requirements and service demand in the Kowloon East Cluster. In July 2008, the Finance Committee approved a sum of \$1,945 million in money-of-the-day prices for a major renovation and expansion project at TKOH. The TKOH expansion project includes, among others, the establishment of obstetric wards, Neonatal Intensive Care Unit ("NICU") as well as Special Care Baby Unit to provide the necessary facilities for the development of obstetric and neonatal services in TKOH. The whole project is targeted for completion by late 2013-2014.

3. HA has also planned to commission the obstetric and NICU services in TKOH in phases, from enhancement of antenatal and postnatal services, delivery of low risk pregnancies to the provision of a full scale service. Before the obstetric and NICU services could be provided in TKOH, UCH would provide the obstetrics and gynaecology ("O&G") inpatient and delivery services for the catchment area of the Kowloon East Cluster.

Deliberations of the Panel

4. The Panel held a meeting in June 2011 to discuss issues relating to the provision of obstetric services in TKOH and receive the views of deputations. The deliberations and concerns of members are summarized below.

Commissioning of the obstetric and neonatal services in TKOH

5. Members noted from the Administration that due to the manpower constraint in public hospitals, HA would review in 2012-2013 the appropriate timing for the commissioning of the obstetric and NICU services in TKOH. Members expressed disappointment at the Administration's reluctance to set out a concrete timetable for the commissioning of the obstetric and NICU services in TKOH. Pointing out that most pregnant women in TKO and Sai Kung had used public hospital services and the number of childbirths in TKO would soon reach the service provision benchmark of 3 000 per year, members urged the Administration to implement effective measures to enhance recruitment and retention of healthcare staff with a view to providing the delivery services in TKOH in 2013-2014 as originally scheduled.

6. According to the Administration, the recent rapid increase in the demand for obstetric services in Hong Kong by non-local women and the departure of experienced doctors and nurses in the O&G and paediatrics specialties had caused tremendous pressure on the overall obstetric and NICU services in public hospitals. In view of the overall manpower constraint, the need to take into account the turnover rate of the healthcare personnel of HA's O&G and paediatric specialties, as well as the number and allocation of new recruits in 2012, the Administration considered it necessary to review in 2012-2013 the appropriate timing for the commissioning of the delivery services in TKOH.

7. Members expressed concern about the long travelling time from TKO and Sai Kung to UCH which might adversely affect the conditions of the expectant

mothers who were in urgent need or about to give birth. They noted the view of a deputation that apart from improving the transportation network within the Kowloon East Cluster, consideration could be given to arranging ambulances to stand by in TKO and Sai Kung for travelling to UCH which could be a cost-effective way to address the critical needs of the pregnant women in the districts.

Manpower supply

8. Members expressed grave concern about the inadequacy of manpower to provide obstetric services in TKOH. They called on the Administration to put in place measures to address the shortage of medical and nursing manpower of O&G and NICU in public hospitals and increase the midwife training places to meet the service growth and manpower need arising from the TKOH expansion project and staff turnover.

9. According to the Administration, depending on the turnover rate, the estimated number of additional doctors and nurses required for commissioning the obstetric and NICU services in TKOH would be 20 and 90 respectively. In this connection, the Kowloon East Cluster had been employing more doctors and midwives since 2010 to prepare for the commissioning of obstetric services in TKOH. However, HA faced serious turnover of doctors and nurses in the O&G specialty in 2010-2011 and the respective turnover rate had reached an unexpectedly historical high at 9.3% and 7%. To ensure the availability of sufficient manpower in the O&G and paediatric specialities upon the commissioning of obstetric services in TKOH, HA would increase the training places of midwife and paediatric nurses as well as doctors in the next few years.

Relevant papers

10. A list of the relevant papers on the Legislative Council website is in **Appendix**.

Appendix

Relevant papers on provision of obstetric services in the Tseung Kwan O Hospital

Committee	Date of meeting	Paper
Panel on Health Services	13.6.2011 (Item V)	Agenda Minutes

Council Business Division 2
Legislative Council Secretariat
15 January 2013