

Attn: Hon. Mok, JP,

Opinions on the Upcoming Electronic Health Record (eHR) Sharing System

I would like to submit my opinions regarding the captioned in the capacity of Chairman of the Working Group on Long Term Care Policy under Elderly Commission, and more importantly, being a practitioner of care to elders for over twenty years.

1. **Importance of Accessing eHR to Social Service Providers**

The proposed eHR sharing system aims to provide an efficient platform for healthcare providers to store and retrieve health-related data of an individual. The Integrated Discharge Support Program for Elderly Patients (IDSP) supported by the Hospital Authority is an integrated medical-social service program with proven effectiveness in reducing hospital readmission and bed days. It exactly demonstrated that with accessible eHR, efficient, timely and quality-assured care delivery to patients is made possible.

2. **Data Exchange through the Upcoming eHR Sharing System as a Key Success Factor for Efficient Care Management**

For models integrating health and social care like IDSP, case management is much emphasized since healthcare and allied healthcare professionals from both sectors take part in a service user's care planning and delivery. Without the presence of an up-to-date and comprehensive database of service users' health records,

- i) additional professional man-hours will be incurred to gather accurate care-related data;
- ii) service users may undergo duplicated tests or even treatment; and
- iii) a complete health history cannot be guaranteed upon variant data sources.

3. **Medical and Social Service Integration as a Trend and a Must in the Coming Future**

To address the multidimensional needs of the ageing population, my organization, being a progressive NGO, has prudently explored the feasibility of integrating health and social care in the past and coming future. We are now piloting a Community Health Centre (CHC) model with reference to the Primary Care Framework to better address the health needs of our members with Hypertension and Dementia in our District Elderly Community Centres (DECC). In future, nurses, paramedics and social workers will be expected to function as case managers in the system. Accessibility to and maintenance of service users' health-related records would thus be essential towards achieving the said integration.

4. **Advocating for Equal Access to eHR among Social Service Providers**

While efforts to protect patients' personal data is much appreciated, from the stance of an NGO operator and policy advisor, ensuring efficient care management for service users shares equal importance. I, therefore, see the need to advocate for equal access to eHR in the social service sector in which healthcare is constantly delivered now and progressively more in the future.

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