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Panel on Health Services

**Background brief prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat
for the special meeting on 17 January 2017**

Commissioning of the Tin Shui Wai Hospital

Purpose

This paper provides background information and summarizes the concerns of members of the Panel on Health Services ("the Panel") on the Tin Shui Wai Hospital ("TSW Hospital").

Background

2. Public hospital services are provided by the Hospital Authority ("HA") on a cluster basis. At present, HA provides medical services for Yuen Long and Tuen Mun (including Tin Shui Wai) districts through its New Territories West ("NTW") Cluster. Taking into account the projected population growth¹ and the increasing demand for public hospital services in the Tin Shui Wai district and the NTW Cluster in general, the Government announced the plan to build a public hospital in Tin Shui Wai in the 2008-2009 Policy Address.

3. It is planned that TSW Hospital will serve as a general hospital to provide accident and emergency ("A&E") services, inpatient services and ambulatory and community care services for its catchment population. It will be supported by the Tuen Mun Hospital as the regional acute general hospital, as well as Pok Oi Hospital in the role of a district general hospital of the NTW Cluster. Moreover, TSW Hospital will enhance the current referral system between

¹ According to the past population projections by the Planning Department, the population of Tin Shui Wai would increase from 287 900 in 2011 to about 292 100 by 2019, whereas the population in Tuen Mun and Yuen Long districts would increase from around 1 066 100 in 2011 to 1 193 700 in 2019.

public hospitals in the NTW Cluster to ensure that patients with diseases or injuries of different severity and complexity will receive the most appropriate hospital services.

Deliberations of the Panel

4. The Panel discussed the construction of TSW Hospital at its meeting held in November 2012, and the future expansion of TSW Hospital in the context of discussing the 10-year public hospital development plan in January 2016. The deliberations and concerns of members are summarized in the following paragraphs.

Scope of facilities and services

5. While expressing support for the construction of TSW Hospital, members were concerned about its limited scope of facilities and services which mainly included (a) inpatient services for emergency care, rehabilitation, convalescent and palliative care; (b) ambulatory services covering an A&E Department; day procedure centre or endoscopy centre; specialist outpatient clinics for medicine and geriatrics, rehabilitation medicine and palliative medicine; a haemodialysis centre; day hospice services; and integrated rehabilitation services; and (c) community care services including community nursing or community geriatric assessment; community rehabilitation service; psychiatric outreaching service; medical social work service; and a health resources centre. In particular, members considered that TSW Hospital should also provide specialist outpatient services in the specialities of gynaecology and paediatrics, mental health, and orthopaedics, as the proportion of young population in Tin Shui Wai was high and the elderly population aged 65 or above in Tuen Mun and Yuen Long districts was projected to increase by 4.5% from 2011 to 2019.

6. The Administration advised that HA would review the healthcare needs of the population in the NTW Cluster before the commissioning of TSW Hospital, and flexibly adjust the scope of facilities and services of the new hospital based on the outcome of the review and the views of the community. In planning the appropriate services to be provided by a hospital, each hospital cluster would take into account the demographic profiles of the districts within the cluster, the services utilization pattern of the local residents, as well as the service scope of the hospitals within the cluster. The commissioning of various services of TSW Hospital, including specialist outpatient services, would be by phases to meet the public healthcare service demand of the catchment population.

7. Members noted that the current ratio of general beds (including acute and convalescent beds) per 1 000 geographical population of its catchment districts

was 2.1 for the NTW Cluster and 2.9 for overall HA hospitals. Some members considered that TSW Hospital's planned bed capacity of 300 inpatient and day beds in total would not be adequate to cope with the service demand of the population of Tin Shui Wai district. There were views that the number should be increased to 500 to 800 inpatient and day beds so that the NTW Cluster could catch up with the territory-wide average bed-to-population ratio. Some members went further to suggest that HA should increase the number of beds in the NTW Cluster to meet the provision of 5.5 beds per 1 000 population as set out in the 2011 edition of the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines.

8. According to HA, the capacity of inpatient services in the NTW Cluster would be expanded by phases through the commissioning of TSW Hospital, continued service expansion of Pok Oi Hospital and improvement works of the Tuen Mun Hospital. It was expected that upon the commissioning of TSW Hospital in 2016, the ratio of hospital beds per 1 000 population would be 4.1 (comprising 2.5 general beds and 1.6 infirmity, mentally ill and handicapped beds) for the NTW Cluster. The Administration explained that the standard of providing 5.5 beds per 1 000 population was formulated by the Government for long-term planning purpose. This planning ratio included all types of hospital beds both in public and private sectors as well as hospital beds in nursing homes and correctional institutions. The planning and development of hospitals was usually determined within regional context, taking into consideration the likely future concentrations of population and the need for different types of hospital beds (i.e. general, infirmary, mentally ill and handicapped beds).

Manpower requirement

9. Members were concerned about the arrangement to deploy existing staff of the NTW Cluster to TSW Hospital for its commissioning of services, which in their view, would further strain the healthcare manpower resources of other public hospitals in the NTW Cluster. Concern was also raised over the doctor-and nurse-to-bed ratio of TSW Hospital, in particular its doctor-to-patient ratio (i.e. 0.23 doctors per 1 000 population) would lag behind the territory average ratio which stood at 0.74 doctors per 1 000 population.

10. HA advised that an additional 70 doctors and 270 nurses would be required to tie in with the commissioning of TSW Hospital. Apart from deploying experienced staff from other public hospitals in the NTW Cluster, HA would recruit additional staff to operate the new beds and run the new services in TSW Hospital. Additional staff, including the yearly intake of medical and nursing graduates, would also be recruited to fill the vacancies so arose in other public hospitals in the NTW Cluster. HA stressed that public hospital services were provided on cluster basis. Hence, the doctor-to-patient ratio should be

calculated on a cluster, rather than an individual hospital, basis. It should also be noted that the variances in the doctor-to-population ratio among the clusters did not necessarily correspond to the differences in the population size among the clusters due to the common trend of cross-cluster utilization of services, the availability of some specialized services only in certain hospitals, and the variance in the medical needs of the population among clusters.

11. On members' concern about the recruitment of supporting staff for TSW Hospital, HA advised that TSW Hospital would require about 700 supporting staff upon its full commissioning. It would recruit, as far as possible, residents of the Tin Shui Wai district to take up the supporting staff's positions.

Future expansion of TSW Hospital

12. With the approval of the Finance Committee of the Legislative Council in February 2013 a commitment of \$3,910.9 million in money-of-the-day prices for the construction of TSW Hospital, members called on the Administration to plan early for the future expansion of TSW Hospital in view of the growing and ageing population in the Tuen Mun and Yuen Long districts. According to the Administration, HA would consider making use of the adjoining site of TSW Hospital for future expansion in the long run.

Latest developments

13. Based on the mid-year population estimates in 2015 published by the Census and Statistics Department, the population of catchment districts of the NTW Cluster was about 1 118 000.

14. TSW Hospital has commenced patient services from 9 January 2017. In the initial phase, TSW Hospital will provide specialist outpatient services for the specialties of medicine and geriatrics, orthopaedics and traumatology, and family medicine from Monday to Friday 9:00 am to 5:00 pm. Renal dialysis, allied health, diagnostic radiology, pharmacy and community nursing has also been put into operation at the same time.

15. According to HA, the A&E Department of TSW Hospital will commence the first phase of service on 15 March 2017. It will initially operate from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm daily. The NTW Cluster will assess the operation, service demand, patient safety and human resources of TSW Hospital in deciding the commencement schedule of other services.

Relevant papers

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

Council Business Division 2
Legislative Council Secretariat
11 January 2017

Relevant papers on the commissioning of the Tin Shui Wai Hospital

| Committee | Date of meeting | Paper |
|--------------------------|------------------------|---|
| Panel on Health Services | 19.11.2012 (Item V) | Agenda Minutes CB(2)442/12-13(01) |
| | 18.1.2016 (Item V) | Agenda Minutes |

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