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For Discussion
on 10 May 1999

LegCo Panel on Health Services
Progress of Y2K Compliance Work of
Department of Health and Government Laboratory

I. Department of Health

Extent of Y2K Problem

With the assistance of Information Technology Services Department (ITSD), Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (EMSD) and Office of the Telecommunications Authority (OFTA), an (DH) was conducted in 1998. A total of 3 computer systems, 32 embedded systems and 8 line communications systems were identified to be mission-critical and Y2K non-compliant.

Actions Taken

2. EMSD and ITSD briefed the DH in June and August 1998 respectively on the Y2K problems and rectification work required.

3. A Working Group within the DH has been formed to oversee and monitor the progress of all activities relating to the Y2K issues. Such activities include inventory taking of all computer systems, embedded systems and line communication systems in use in the DH, identifying systems that are Y2K non-compliant and formulating rectification plans and contingency plans. Close liaison has been maintained with the supporting departments with a view to rectifying the non-compliant mission-critical systems by the end of June 1999.

Contingency Plans

4. A contingency plan for the whole DH identifying and addressing possible areas of emergencies relating to temporary power failure, water and gas supplies shortage, failure of medical and laboratory equipment, shortage of supplies or communication failure, etc. is being prepared.

5. Contingency strategies include manual mode of operation, use of standby machines, re-deployment of manpower resources, acquisition of additional stock of drugs and medical supplies, emergency notification system and public relations plan.

II. Government Laboratory

Extent of Y2K Problem

6. The Government Laboratory supports various Government departments in discharging their duties. Examples of health related functions include testing of food samples, of pharmaceutical products and radiation monitoring.

7. Any instrument, application software, network or accessory which would have direct and immediate impact on the public health (e.g. food testing) is regarded as critical. Out of the 366 computers and embedded instruments in the Laboratory, 28 items were identified to be mission-critical. 17 of these critical systems and one self-developed software system were found to be non-Y2K compliant.

Progress of Rectification Work

8. By the end of April 1999, 16 of the 18 identified systems had been rectified. It is anticipated that the remaining 2 systems will be rectified by the end of June 1999. These two systems are the Integrated Laboratory Instrumentation Network and the Computerized Security Access Control System.

Contingency Plans

9. A comprehensive contingency plan will be prepared for the whole Laboratory, so as to ensure that important samples and evidence are kept intact in case any unforeseen service interruption occurs.

Health and Welfare Bureau
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