

LCQ11: Public Wi-Fi services provided in public hospitals

Following is a question by Dr the Hon Pierre Chan and a written reply by the Secretary for Food and Health, Professor Sophia Chan, in the Legislative Council today (September 8):

Question:

At present, all public hospitals are installed with Wi-Fi.HK hotspots (hotspots) to provide members of the public with free public Wi-Fi services. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether it knows the following information on the hotspots currently installed in various public hospitals (set out in a table): (i) the number of hotspots (and among them, the respective numbers of those using 2.4 and 5 GHz bands), (ii) the locations and (iii) the daily average usage;

(2) whether it knows the factors considered by the Hospital Authority (HA) when selecting locations in public hospitals for installing hotspots;

(3) given that hotspot signs have been put up near each hotspot in various public hospitals at present, whether the Government knows if HA has assessed, in respect of such signs, whether (i) their display positions are appropriate, and (ii) their numbers are sufficient; if HA has, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(4) whether it knows the cyber security measures adopted by HA for protecting the safety of Wi-Fi service users?

Reply:

President,

In consultation with the Innovation and Technology Bureau and the Hospital Authority (HA), my reply to the various parts of the question raised by Dr the Hon Pierre Chan is as follows:

(1) and (2) Through the "Wi-Fi Connected City" programme implemented by the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer (OGCIO), the HA invited telecommunications service operators to participate in the Public-Private Collaboration (PPC) arrangement to provide public access to free Wi-Fi service at the HA's public hospitals on a voluntary and self-funded basis. Currently free Wi-Fi service at 16 public hospitals are being provided by operators participating in the PPC arrangement. On the other hand, the OGCIO has funded the provision of free Wi-Fi service in 27 public hospitals. To enhance public access to the free Wi-Fi service, Wi-Fi.HK hotspots mainly cover public waiting areas of the public hospitals, including Accident

&Emergency (A&E) departments, outpatient clinics, pharmacies and restaurants. A vast majority of the "Wi-Fi.HK" hotspots in the aforesaid public hospitals support both the 2.4 GHz and 5 GHz frequency bands. Details are set out in Annex.

(3) The HA and its operators had, in accordance with the guidelines issued by the OGCI0, put up signage of the hotspot icon near "Wi-Fi.HK" hotspots in all participating venues under the "Wi-Fi Connected City" programme, so as to inform the public of the relevant services. Aside from that, details on the locations of all "Wi-Fi.HK" hotspots have been uploaded to the "Wi-Fi.HK" website and "Wi-Fi.HK" mobile app.

(4) All service operators providing public Wi-Fi are required to follow the "Guidelines on the Security Aspects for the Design, Implementation, Management and Operation of Public Wi-Fi Service" issued by the Office of the Communications Authority, as well as adhering to the related operational safety guidelines issued by the OGCI0. Aside from that, service operators have to adopt digital server certificates to enable Wi-Fi service users to verify the identity of the organisation that provides the service. A client isolation function has also been applied to free Wi-Fi services at government venues (including at public hospitals) to serve as another layer of safety precaution to reduce the risk and threats of attacks among users' devices connected to the Wi-Fi hotspots.