

LCQ15: Plans for increasing public hospital beds

Following is a question by the Hon Jimmy Ng and a written reply by the Secretary for Food and Health, Professor Sophia Chan, in the Legislative Council today (June 13):

Question:

It is learnt that all public hospitals experience an overflow of patients every year when Hong Kong enters an influenza peak season. It has been reported that since 1997, the total number of public hospital beds has increased only slightly by 2.9%, which is far lower than the 11% growth of Hong Kong's population during the same period. This, coupled with the increasing demand for medical services arising from an increasingly ageing population, has resulted in a persistent short supply of public hospital beds. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the authorities' plans to increase public hospital beds and construct new hospitals in the coming five years and the latest progress of such plans (including the timetable), as well as how such plans will address the increased healthcare needs brought about by the ageing population in Hong Kong; and

(2) as the "Hong Kong 2030+: Towards a Planning Vision and Strategy Transcending 2030" projects that special medical facilities (including a Chinese medicine hospital and testing centre) will, in addition, take up about five hectares of land, of the criteria and assumptions adopted by the Government in arriving at that projected figure on land demand, and the relevant details?

Reply:

President,

Having consulted the Development Bureau, my reply to the various parts of the question raised by the Hon Jimmy Ng is as follows:

(1) In the recent years, a number of hospital redevelopment, expansion and development projects have been completed and put into operation including the development of North Lantau Hospital, Tin Shui Wai Hospital, Main Clinical Block and Trauma Centre of Prince of Wales Hospital, Ambulatory Care Block of Tseung Kwan O Hospital, phase 2 redevelopment of Caritas Medical Centre and redevelopment of Yan Chai Hospital. Hong Kong Children's Hospital is scheduled to commence service by phases from the fourth quarter of 2018.

To cater for the growing healthcare service demand and to improve existing services, \$200 billion has been earmarked for the Government and the

Hospital Authority (HA) to implement the first 10-year Hospital Development Plan (HDP) in 2016. The first 10-year HDP covers the construction of a new acute hospital, redevelopment and expansion of 11 hospitals, construction of three community health centres and one supporting services centre. In terms of deliverables, the first 10-year HDP will provide around 5 000 additional beds, 94 additional operating theatres, 30 haemodialysis day beds, three oncology centres and one state-of-the-art neuroscience centre, and also increased capacity of specialist outpatient clinics and general outpatient clinics.

In response to the increasing demand for healthcare services due to demographic changes, the Government has invited the HA to start planning the second HDP. In formulating the second HDP, the HA will take into account a number of factors, including demographic changes, service utilisation and changes in service delivery models of each district, with a view to having a comprehensive projection of the future demand for public healthcare services, including the demand for hospital beds.

Besides, HA will continue to provide additional beds for existing and newly completed hospitals through its annual plan. HA has provided 250, 231 and 229 new beds in 2015-16, 2016-17 and 2017-18 respectively. To meet the growing demand arising from the growing and ageing population, HA will open a total of 574 additional beds in 2018-19.

The HA will regularly monitor and review the utilisation rates and demand trend of various healthcare services. It will also enhance the service capacity, undertake hospital development projects and implement other suitable measures to ensure that public healthcare services can meet the public needs.

(2) Medical facilities occupy mainly "Government, Institution or Community" (G/IC) land. The estimates on the future G/IC land requirement in "Hong Kong 2030+: Towards a Planning Vision and Strategy Transcending 2030" (Hong Kong 2030+) are mainly categorised into two broad types. The first is the major special facilities, which are those facilities supported by specific policies and are not tied to population level according to the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines (HKPSG). These land requirements are provided by relevant policy bureaux. Table 3-1 of the topical paper "Consolidated Land Requirement and Supply Analysis" (Topical Paper), prepared for Hong Kong 2030+, summarises the land requirement assessment regarding these major special facilities. Medical facilities in the table mainly include a Chinese medicine hospital and testing and quarantine facilities as mentioned in the question. The link to the Topical Paper is as follows:

www.hk2030plus.hk/document/Consolidated%20Land%20Requirement%20and%20Supply%20Analysis_Eng.pdf.

The second type is population-based facilities, which generally refer to those having population-based requirements under HKPSG, including schools, district recreational facilities, medical facilities, etc. For these facilities, we mainly adopted the land/person ratio to estimate their future land requirements. With reference to the recommended planned provisions of

relevant facilities for the Kwu Tung North New Development Area, a 3.5 square meters land/person ratio is adopted in the aforementioned Topical Paper. The estimated G/IC land requirement calculated according to the above ratio is about 343 hectares, including population-based medical facilities, such as the land requirement arising from general hospitals, clinics and community health centres.