

LCQ6: Development of general hospitals

Following is a question by the Hon Holden Chow and a reply by the Secretary for Food and Health, Professor Sophia Chan, in the Legislative Council today (October 30):

Question:

At present, the North Lantau Hospital (NLH) is not a general hospital, making it necessary for quite a number of Tung Chung residents to travel a long distance to seek consultation at the Princess Margaret Hospital. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council if it knows:

(1) the criteria adopted by the Hospital Authority (HA) for determining the need to develop a non-general hospital into a general one, and the existing general hospitals in the various districts across the territory;

(2) whether HA has plans to develop NLH into a general hospital, so as to meet the incessantly increasing healthcare needs of Tung Chung brought about by its population growth; and

(3) whether HA has plans to introduce new specialist outpatient services at NLH in the coming five years; if so, the details?

Reply:

President,

Below is my reply to the various parts of the question raised by Hon Holden Chow:

(1) The Hospital Authority (HA) plans its services on a cluster basis. In planning and developing various public healthcare services, the HA takes into account a number of factors, including the projected demand for healthcare services based on population growth and demographic changes, advancement of medical technology, manpower situation as well as the service arrangement in each cluster and hospital, etc. The HA monitors the utilisation of its various healthcare services and updates the service demand projection regularly according to the population projection across different districts in Hong Kong and development plan of the Government for the purpose of planning public healthcare services.

Due to development of service models, some HA hospitals provide specific specialist service, while hospitals providing general hospital services are planned via a cluster-based approach. The roles of different hospitals within a cluster are clearly defined, enabling collaboration and mutual support among hospitals, so as to ensure that patients would receive a continuum of healthcare services within the same geographical setting and throughout their episode of illness – from its acute phase to convalescence and

rehabilitation, and community care after discharge. The existing general hospitals in each HA cluster are set out in Annex.

(2) and (3) The HA formulated the Clinical Services Plan (CSP) for the Kowloon West Cluster in 2019. The CSP maps out the cluster's clinical strategies and future service directions in meeting the long-term healthcare needs of the community, which include examining the role and positioning of the North Lantau Hospital (NLTH) in the cluster, NLTH's expansion project and service scope, etc. Based on the planning principles of the CSP, services provided by various clinical specialties of the Princess Margaret Hospital, Caritas Medical Centre, Yan Chai Hospital, NLTH and Kwai Chung Hospital will be organised in a cluster-based service network so as to provide equitable, timely, suitable and quality medical services for residents of different catchment areas of the cluster.

According to the aforementioned CSP, NLTH is positioned as a general hospital and has been progressively providing specialist services such as Emergency Medicine, Medicine, Surgery, Orthopaedics and Traumatology, Gynaecology, Paediatrics and Psychiatry since its service commissioning in 2013. NLTH provides 24-hour emergency and extended care services mainly for Tung Chung residents. It also operates an Emergency Medicine Ward and provides ambulatory surgical service, day rehabilitation service, specialist out-patient clinic service as well as general out-patient clinic service. Out-patient and ambulatory services will be available in a number of specialties to enhance ambulatory care. To provide more comprehensive services, NLTH has commenced gynaecology specialist out-patient service in early October 2019, and will enhance paediatric out-patient service in order to meet the local service demand. New model of medical-social collaboration and community support programme will also be piloted in NLTH. The HA will keep monitoring the needs of local residents for service planning.

In the long run, we preliminarily plan to embark on the phase 2 development of NLTH using the adjoining reserved site under the Second Ten-year Hospital Development Plan, with a view to providing additional beds and meeting the long-term demands of local residents for healthcare services.