

**Minutes of the
Social Welfare Advisory Committee (SWAC) Meeting**

**3 March 2011 (Thursday) at 3:00 p.m.
Room 215, Main Wing, Central Government Offices**

Present

Professor CHAN Yuk-shee	(Chairman)
Mr Bunny CHAN Chung-bun	
Ms Maggie CHAN Mei-kit	
Ms Anna May CHAN Mei-lan	
Mr David FONG Man-hung	
Dr IP Yan-ming	
Dr LAM Ching-choi	
Mr Christopher LAW Kin-chung	
Mr Timothy MA Kam-wah	
Mrs Agnes MAK Tang Pik-yee	
Mr Joseph MAN Hung-yee	
Ms Theresa TAO Chee-ying	
Dr Sandra TSANG Kit-man	
Mrs Teresa TSIEN WONG Bik-kwan	
Mr Ben WONG Chung-mat	
Mr Michael WONG Yick-kam	
Miss Helen KWAN	(Secretary)

In Attendance

Labour and Welfare Bureau (LWB)

Mr Paul TANG	Permanent Secretary for Labour and Welfare (PSLW)
Mr Roy TANG	Deputy Secretary for Labour and Welfare (Welfare)1 (DS(W)1)
Ms Irene YOUNG	Deputy Secretary for Labour and Welfare (Welfare)2 (DS(W)2)
Ms Karyn CHAN	Principal Assistant Secretary for Labour and Welfare (Welfare)1 (PAS(W)1)

Mr Stephen SUI Commissioner for Rehabilitation (C for R)

Social Welfare Department (SWD)

Mr Patrick NIP Director of Social Welfare (DSW)

Absent with apologies

Dr Dorothy CHAN YUEN Tak-fai

Ms LAM Shuk-yee

Dr LEUNG Wing-tai

Mr Jovy SUEN Leung-kwong

Dr Jimmy WONG Chi-ho

Mr Charles YANG Chuen-liang

**Discussion Item: Briefing on the welfare-related initiatives in the
2011-12 Budget
[SWAC Paper No. 01/2011]**

Members were briefed on the welfare-related initiatives in the 2011-12 Budget.

2. Members asked the following questions / offered the following comments –

- (a) The extent to which this year's new initiatives would meet the service needs and reduce the waiting time for various welfare services;
- (b) More support to carers for elders at home should be given to help relieve their stress, such as providing carers with subsidies;
- (c) It is important to maintain a balance in the allocation of welfare resources in view that the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance and Social Security Allowance Schemes accounted for about 70% of the recurrent expenditure in social welfare;
- (d) Whether welfare spending would be sustainable as the expenditure on social welfare had significantly increased;

- (e) The supply and quality of manpower, particularly paramedical professionals in the welfare sector, was an issue of concern;
- (f) A review could be conducted to consider whether some of the duties of healthcare professionals could be performed by other workers without professional training; and
- (g) The Administration should consider providing community or religious bodies with incentives for redevelopment and proactively request for incorporation of welfare facilities in new development projects, redevelopment projects and rail extension projects.

3. The Administration gave the following response –

- (a) The waiting time for different rehabilitation services for persons with disabilities varied while the waiting time for residential services for persons with severe disabilities was relatively longer. The Administration would continue to closely monitor the service demand by observing the changes in waiting time and the number of persons on the waiting list;
- (b) It would be more effective to allocate resources to enhance community care services for persons in need instead of introducing a carer's allowance. The Administration also supported elders' carers through training, respite service, etc., to help them perform their family functions and relieve their burden;
- (c) Expenditures on social security and other direct services had increased at comparable rates (i.e. by 45.1% and 42.7% respectively) over the last decade;
- (d) The magnitude of increase of the recurrent expenditure on social welfare was larger than the growth in overall Government recurrent expenditure and the Gross Domestic Product;
- (e) SWD had been working closely with the Hospital Authority to offer training programmes for enrolled nurses since 2006, and about 90% of the graduates had been serving the social welfare sector upon completion of programme;

- (f) The Employees Retraining Board had been offering a number of healthcare-related training courses at entry level. The increasing number of graduates from training programmes for nurses could help relieve the stress on manpower shortage; and
- (g) The Administration had been making active efforts in identifying and securing suitable premises for welfare facilities, including those made available by new development and redevelopment projects. The Administration had also been working closely with non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in their redevelopment projects, and NGOs might apply for the Lotteries Fund to cover the construction costs for their redevelopment projects with welfare elements.

SWAC Secretariat
September 2011