

**Minutes of the
Social Welfare Advisory Committee (SWAC) Meeting
held on 28 February 2007 at 2:30 p.m.
in Room 2005, Murray Building, Central**

Present

Mr Wilfred Wong (Chairman)
Dr Stephen Chow Chun-kay
Dr Miranda Chung Chan Lai-foon
Ms Christine Fang Meng-sang
Mr Quentin Fong
Mr Herman Hui Chung-shing
Mr Kwan Chuk-fai
Dr Benjamin Lai Sau-shun
Dr Lam Ching-choi
Prof Japhet Sebastian Law
Dr Leung Wing-tai
Mr Vincent Lo Wing-sang
Mr Timothy Ma Kam-wah
Prof Tang Kwong-leung
Ms Marina Wong Yu-pok
Ms Lisa Yip Sau-wah
Ms Wendy Cheung (Secretary)

In Attendance

Health, Welfare and Food Bureau (HWFB)

Miss Eliza Lee Deputy Secretary for Health, Welfare & Food
(Family and Women)
Mr Freely Cheng Principal Assistant Secretary for Health, Welfare &
Food (Family)
Ms Shea Wing-man Assistant Secretary for Health, Welfare and Food
(Family)¹

Social Welfare Department (SWD)

Mr Paul Tang Director of Social Welfare

Department of Health

Dr Shirley Leung Principal Medical & Health Officer (Family Health Service)

Absent with apologies

Mr Bunny Chan Chung-bun

Mr Tung Chi-fat

Dr Jimmy Wong

Mr Silva Yeung

Item 1: Briefing on 2007-08 Budget Speech relating to the Welfare side

Members were briefed on the 2007-08 Budget relating to the welfare side.

2. Members made the following comments:

(a) whether the proposed one-stop services for elderly discharges would be similarly provided to those originally resided in residential care homes; and

(b) when the Child Development Fund would be ready for use and which department would be responsible for its administration.

3. The Government made the following responses:

- (a) the elderly discharges originally residing in residential care homes would continue to be assisted by the in-house nurses of the elderly homes and the outreaching service of the Community Geriatric Assessment Team of the Hospital Authority; and
- (b) the long-term use of the Child Development Fund had yet to be decided. But, the Commission of Poverty would shortly discuss the detailed arrangements for the additional resources set aside to pilot child development projects.

4. The Meeting supported the 2007-08 Budget as different sectors of the community could enjoy the fruits of economic prosperity. They noted that the Government had provided additional resources for various welfare uses. SWAC Members would be kept informed of the new/enhanced initiatives.

Item 2: Briefing on Comprehensive Child Development Service: Review of Pilot Implementation (SWAC Paper No. 1/07)

5. Members were briefed on the review findings of the pilot implementation of the Comprehensive Child Development Service (CCDS).

6. Members made the following comments:

- (a) the roles of the nurses in the Maternal and Child Health Centres (MCHCs) were critical in the screening process and

Members would like to know if the former were ready to accept their new role;

- (b) whether adequate training had been provided to the nurses concerned. Additional resources for training and more on-the-job training might be needed. Training might also be incorporated into the tertiary education curricula for nurses/social workers in the long run if necessary;
- (c) using MCHCs as a service access point was good and Members suggested adopting a similar approach for other welfare services;
- (d) whether the extension of the CCDS would depend on the availability of additional resources;
- (e) CCDS should focus on serving the high-risk communities. Subject to the availability of resources, the Government might consider providing social workers at MCHCs and strengthening support to the needy clients;
- (f) the success of the CCDS would depend on the continued provision of services to children beyond the age of six; and
- (g) more parenting programmes/seminars might be arranged by MCHCs to support parents of children with early signs of behavioural problems.

7. The Government made the following response:

- (a) the mindset of the nurses had gradually been changed even before the commencement of the CCDS. In fact, the clients' feedback on the nurses' performance in the CCDS had so far been very positive;
- (b) counselling skills were part and parcel of nurses' basic training. Moreover, the nurses for CCDS were specially trained to enhance their interviewing skills and use tools to systematically identify at-risk clients;
- (c) a total of \$30 million recurrent resources had been allocated to implement, improve and partially extend the CCDS pilot. The CCDS would be extended to a few more districts in 2007-08 and the Financial Secretary had also announced in the 2007-08 Budget that the Government planned to extend the CCDS to all districts in phases and strengthen social services support;
- (d) in selecting communities for the CCDS pilot, one of the major considerations was the risk factors of the communities. If the pilot results indicated that it was essential to place social workers in MCHCs, the Bureau might consider bidding additional resources for this;
- (e) with the parents' consent, the results would also be sent to the primary schools concerned for continued follow-up;
- (f) the CCDS aimed to ensure early identification of the varied

needs of children and their families and timely referral to appropriate services for intervention. Cases with psycho-social needs requiring social work intervention would be referred to the Integrated Family Service Centres for follow-up. Moreover, the CCDS would not address all the problems of young children and their families. However, if problems could be identified and dealt with at an early stage, it would help save more resource-intensive interventions afterwards; and

- (g) when the CCDS was rolled out, coordination work with pre-primary institutions through school development officers of EMB would be strengthened and adequate training would be provided to pre-primary educators.

8. The Meeting endorsed the approach of CCDS pilot and considered that its primary objective had been achieved. Members were highly appreciative of the efforts and support provided by the front-line staff. With the encouraging results of the CCDS pilot, the service should be extended to more communities. The pilot CCDS had enhanced inter-sectoral collaboration. As a further step, more information sharing, case discussion and flexibility in managing services in supporting target clients could be further encouraged.

Item 3: Family Education Initiatives (SWAC Paper 2/07)

9. Members were briefed on the Government's initiatives to strengthen and extend family education.

10. Members made the following comments:

- (a) using Announcements in the Public Interest (APIs) to disseminate positive short message would be more effective than producing a drama series. More themes might be used and the APIs could be more targeted to certain groups such as those whom we would like to initiate changes;
- (b) APIs should be broadcast more frequently and through various channels; and
- (c) the Hong Kong media normally reported the negative sides of the stories. As such, the Government should counteract by producing publicity programmes to showcase more positive stories.

11. The Government made the following responses :

- (a) a soft approach was generally adopted in programmes for promoting family values and education. However, a tougher approach would be adopted for certain messages such as publicity programmes against domestic violence;
- (b) SWD had produced publicity materials for more sensitive social issues, such as, elderly abuse but they had to compete the airtime with other publicity materials. Moreover, the airtime on TV and broadcast on the Roadshow was costly;
- (c) as a positive publicity effort, SWD would publicize some

positive stories in a series in a newspaper shortly. SWD would also strive for more exposure in sending positive messages through different channels; and

- (d) some organizations borrowed the APIs for family education and positive feedback had been received.

12. The Meeting concluded that the government did a good job on promoting the family education. If the Government decided to form the Family Commission, more focused publicity campaigns might be launched to address the social changes faced by the Hong Kong families.

Health, Welfare and Food Bureau

April 2007