

Environmental Report 2001

Health and Welfare Bureau

Profile of Key Responsibilities

The Health and Welfare Bureau is responsible for policy areas of medical and health, elderly, social welfare and women's issues. It aims to formulate and coordinate policies and programmes:

- (i) to ensure that adequate welfare support is available to those in need;
- (ii) to safeguard and promote public health and to ensure that no one is prevented, through lack of means, from obtaining adequate medical treatment; and
- (iii) to promote the well-being and interests of women in Hong Kong.

2. The Health and Welfare Bureau is organised into four divisions for the following responsibilities:

Medical and Health Division

- Policy matters relating to medical and health services, including review of health care delivery and financing systems, development of primary health care services, prevention of communicable and non-communicable diseases, development of Chinese medicines, provision of hospital services and manpower development issues.

Elderly Services Division

Policy matters relating to elderly services and social security; and

Elderly Commission.

Welfare Division

- Policy matters relating to overall social welfare provision including subvention, planning, manpower including social workers, and specific welfare services for family and children, young people, war veterans and people with disabilities.

Women's Division

Policy matters relating to women's issues, including the Women's Commission, impact of government policies, legislation and services on women, and international conventions on women's issues;

Bureau administration; and

Resource management.

3. The estimated expenditure of the Health and Welfare Bureau in 2001-02 was \$101.6 million. The Bureau had 15 directorate officers and 99 non-directorate staff as at 31 March 2001. Its establishment ceiling for 2001-02 was \$42.8 million.

Environmental Goal and Policy

4. The Health and Welfare Bureau supports the HKSAR Government's initiatives to improve the environment and is committed to help improve our own environmental performance by:

- (i) compliance with relevant environmental protection ordinances;
- (ii) promotion of waste reduction;
- (iii) advising other bureaux on the impact of their policies on public health;
- (iv) minimising the production of environmental pollutants and/or nuisance;
- (v) improving the general environmental conditions; and
- (vi) saving of resources.

Environmental Aspects and Impacts

5. The policies under the purview of Health and Welfare Bureau may have environmental impact in various aspects, including waste disposal, air pollution and conservation of the environment. Such impacts would be taken into account when drawing up the policies.

Environmental Protection Measures

6. The following measures are relevant to environmental protection:

(A) Under policy areas

- (i) Clinical waste

to map out with the Hospital Authority the way forward in delivering Government's objective to dispose of clinical waste in an environmentally sound manner.

Performance

The Hospital Authority, through segregation of its clinical waste from municipal waste, reduced the amount of its clinical waste requiring disposal from 0.11kg per patient bed per day in 1999 to 0.1kg per patient bed per day in 2001.

The Hospital Authority ceased the operation of one of its three remaining hospital incinerators in 2000.

(ii) Smoking and tobacco control

reduce smoking prevalence and hence improve the air quality, by discouraging smoking, educating the public, particularly the young, on the health risks involved, containing proliferation of tobacco use and protecting the public from passive smoking to the maximum possible extent.

Performance

Hong Kong's smoking prevalence rate is among the lowest in the world. In 2000, only 12.4% of the population aged 15 or above were daily smokers, representing a significant drop from 23.3% in 1982. To further strengthen our tobacco control framework, the Bureau launched in June 2001 a consultation exercise to consult the public on a host of legislative proposals to amend the smoking legislation. The consultation exercise ended in September 2001 and the Bureau is currently refining the proposals taking into account the feedback received and the results of related studies.

(B) Within the office

(i) Waste minimisation

- ✧ use of "scrap" paper and recycled paper
- ✧ extended use of refillable ball pens
- ✧ reuse of envelopes, loose minutes jackets and action tags
- ✧ use less paper cups
- ✧ reduce use of greeting cards
- ✧ reuse of decorative materials at festive seasons

- ✧ place notices near photocopiers to remind staff of double sided copying
- ✧ encourage circulating information, reports and consultation papers etc. through electronic means instead of using paper
- ✧ use the blank side of used paper for drafting and photocopying
- ✧ avoid sending original documents which have been sent by fax
- ✧ use double-side photocopiers
- ✧ use plain paper fax machines instead of thermal paper ones

Performance

Generally effective

(ii) Energy conservation

- ✧ remind staff to switch off lights, air-conditioners and personal computers outside office hours
- ✧ encourage staff to use staircase for interfloor traffic
- ✧ use energy-saving fluorescent lights

Performance

Generally effective

(iii) Others

- ✧ conducted indoor air quality measurements in the office in August 2001
- ✧ implemented the Government' s “Smoke-free Workplace Policy”
- ✧ use unleaded fuel for departmental cars

Performance

Generally effective

Environmental Awareness within the Bureau

7. To improve the environmental awareness within the Bureau, a directorate officer has been appointed as the green manager of the Bureau since 1993. The officer has provided a focal point for introducing and reviewing environmental protection initiatives. Staff of the Bureau would be encouraged to attend training/workshops on green management and will continue to identify measures, both under policy areas or within the office, to protect our environment.

Health and Welfare Bureau

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